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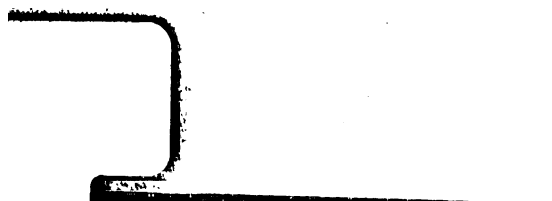
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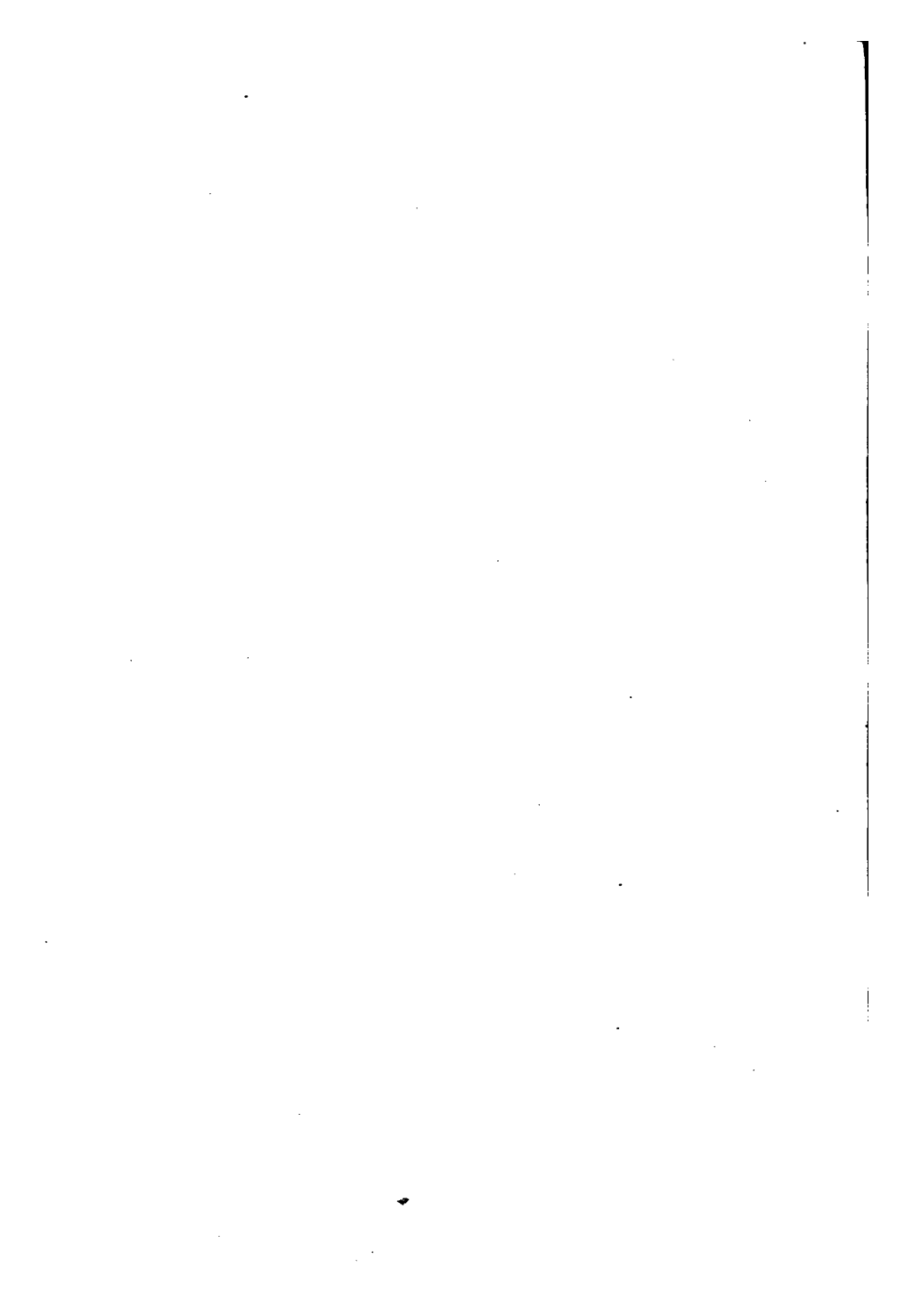
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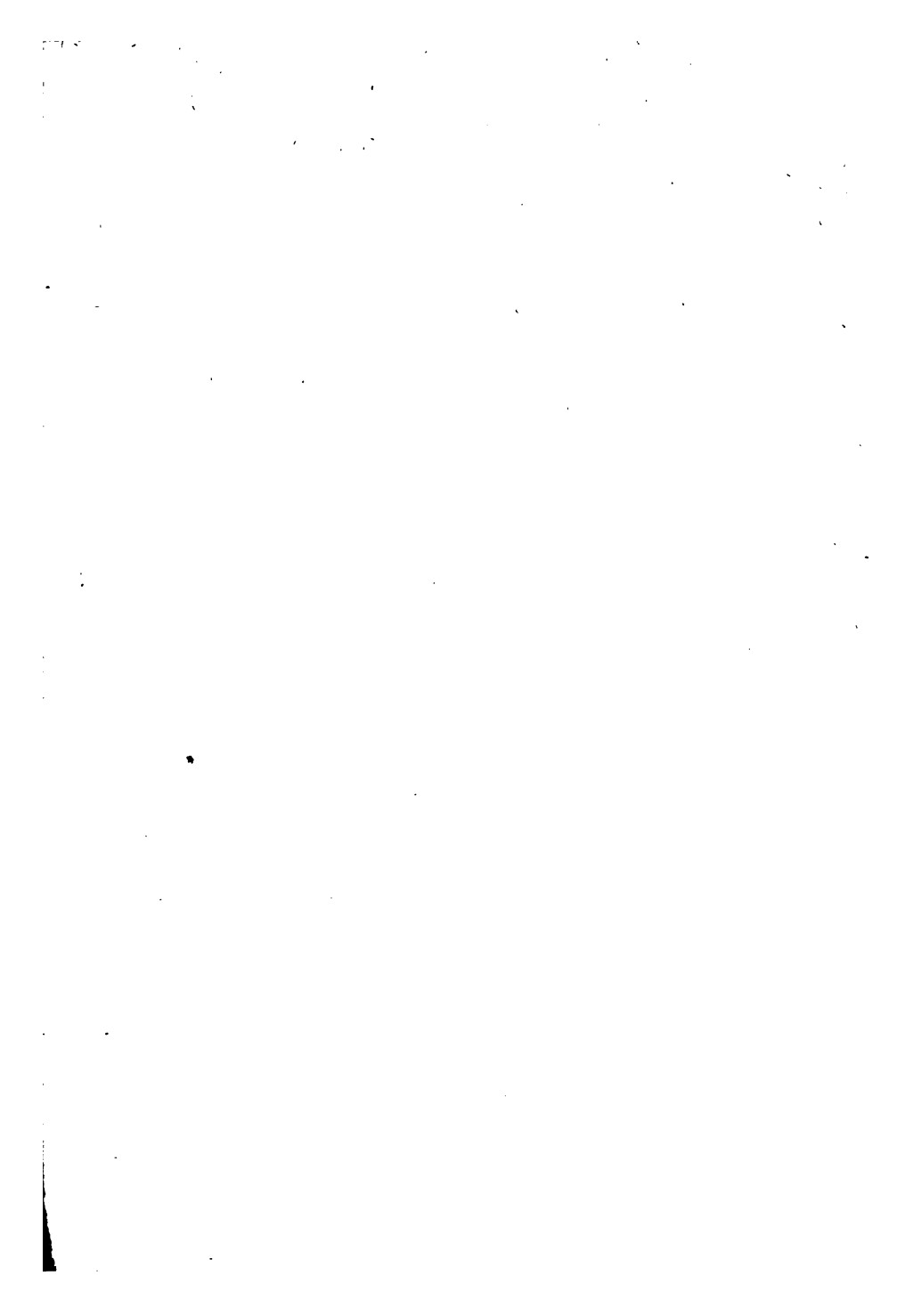
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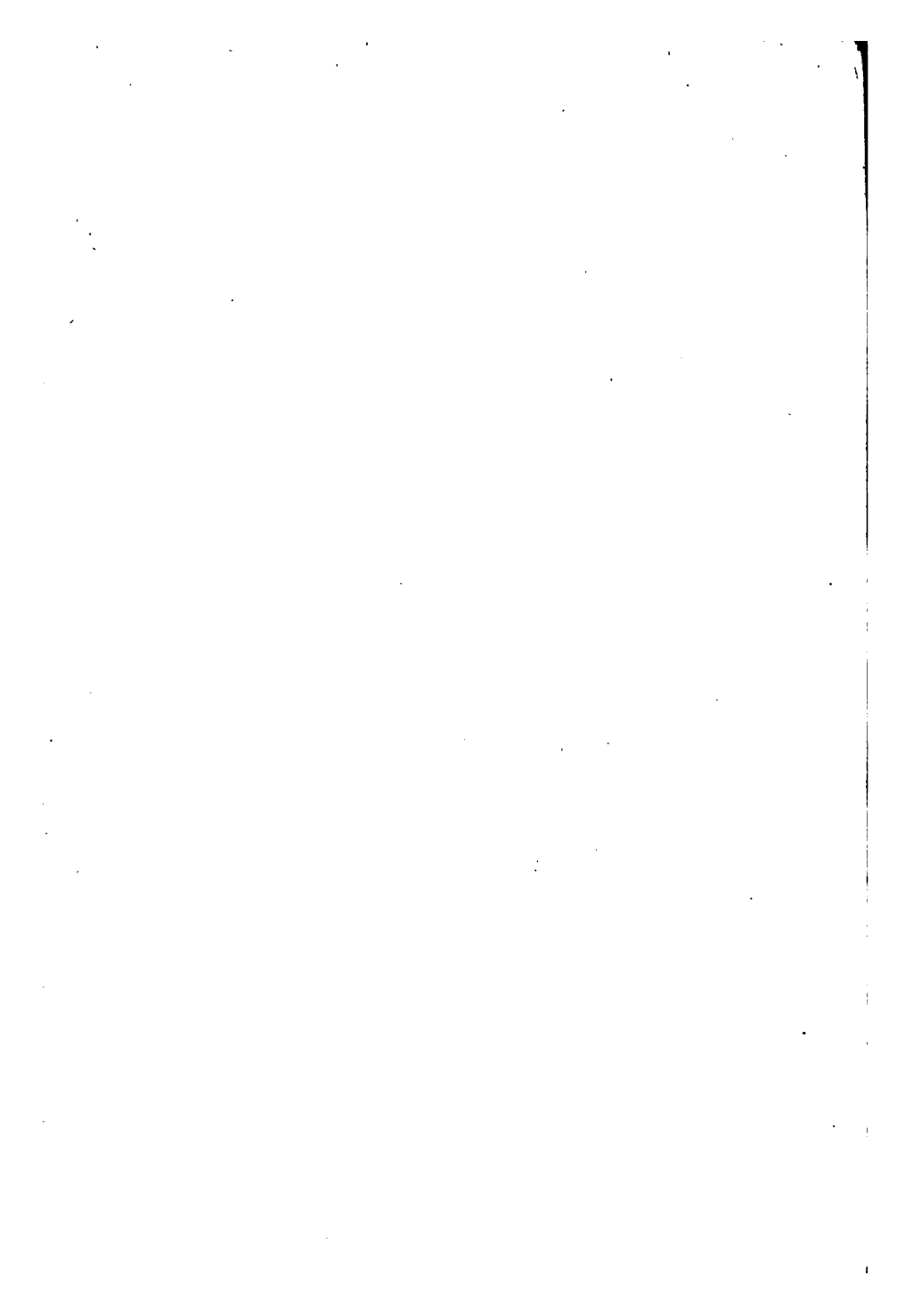






"BOTH ENGINES NOW STOOD UP TO THEIR THROTTLES IN SNOW."





TRAINS THAT MET IN THE BLIZZARD

A COMPOSITE ROMANCE

BEING A CHRONICLE OF THE EXTRAORDINARY ADVENTURE
OF A PARTY OF TWELVE MEN AND ONE WOMAN
IN THE GREAT AMERICAN BLIZZARD

MARCH 12, 1888

BY

R. PITCHER WOODWARD

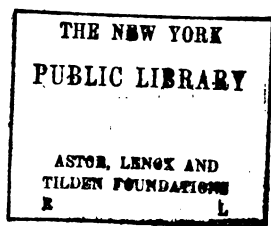
WITH THIRTY-EIGHT ILLUSTRATIONS BY

DAN BEARD, J. CARTER BEARD, HARRY L. V. PARKHURST
AND THE ARTIST OF THE PARTY



NEW YORK
SALMAGUNDI PUBLISHING COMPANY

1896
1100



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LEND ME YOUR EYE—THAT'S ALL.

THE gems of literature are said to have been written by inspiration. This book was written by perspiration.

Most authors have a motive for writing ; I had four motives :

First, selfishly, to cultivate a happy disposition.

Second, generously, to earn my salt and shoe-leather.

Third, charitably, to be the means, in a measure, of keeping my fellow men cool in hot summer days, and making them appreciate the comforts of a fireside in winter.

Fourth, vainly (don't tell anybody), to make myself *immortal*.

All who write books entertain a secret desire to become immortal. They won't admit it, but it is nevertheless true. Of course, there must be an exception to prove the rule ; one author recently claimed in verse that he did not wish immortality, so he probably won't have it.

I do not disclaim having been inspired, but I say inspiration cannot be depended upon. I waited seven years patiently for it to seize me that I might be enabled to carry out an obligation contracted in 1888, when snowbound with a party of belated travelers in the great blizzard in the heart of the Alleghanies.

I, Pythagoras Pod, the historian of that party, have endeavored to chronicle their terrible and, at times, amusing experiences in that unprecedented storm, to the best of my ability, knowledge, memory and belief.

I began the *great* work May 1, 1895, and wrote by perspiration until July 32d, when the inspiration began to play from my fountain pen.

Seated in the bathtub that scorching day, when it was two hundred and fifty degrees in the shade, my imagination, stimulated by peppermint drops, mint julep, electric fans, Greenland newspapers, books of arctic travel and volumes—of cold water, I finally got started on a go-as-you-please gait, which I kept up until April 1, 1896. Indeed it is not pleasant to feel that I am an April Fool, and I allow nobody else to say so.

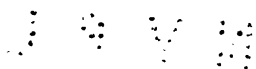
I thought my troubles would cease with the completion of my story, but alas ! they appeared only to have begun.

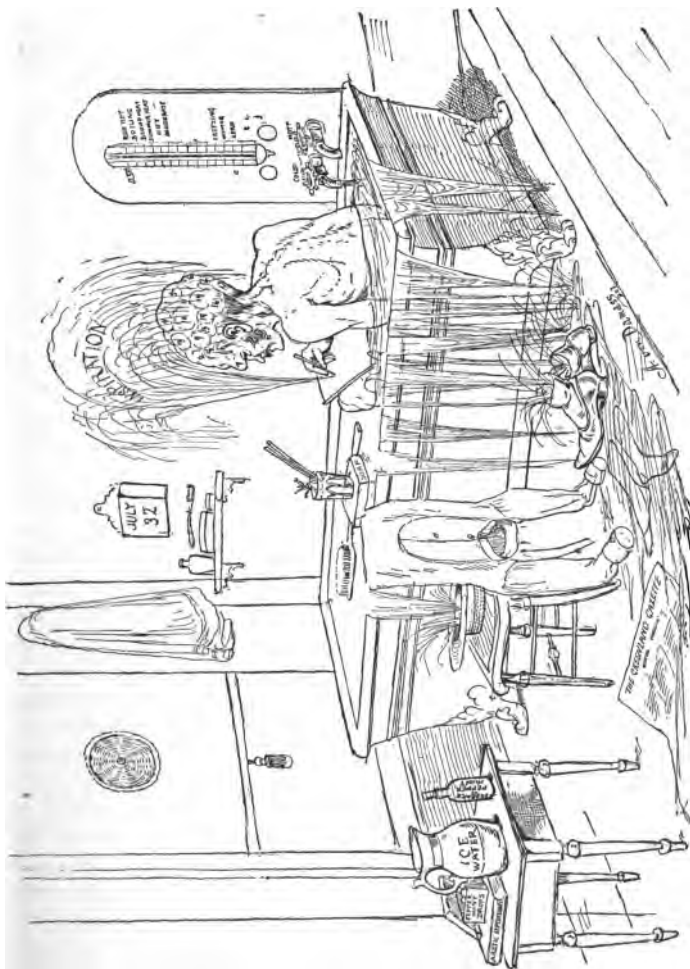
To begin with, my life's ambition to follow literature as a profession has been the bane of my parents' existence. Many are the manuscripts that I have hurriedly thrown into waste baskets, table drawers, furnace and other receptacles, when my parents have surprised me ; and the falsehoods I have told in denying that I was writing, or trying to write, must have filled my account in the Heavenly ledger pretty full of debits, I fear.

This book has been written, consequently, in public libraries, parks and police stations ; at home when the family, upon my urgent recommendation, were out of town for health and pleasure, to the extent of twenty-five and twenty-six hours a day ; and when the family were at home, from cookrise to sunrise, or during the day, in the bathtub, on the roof, and in the coal bin ; again while riding in the street cars—when I had the fare, and at the restaurant—when invited to lunch, at receptions and at funerals—at any and all times and places, when and where I was not likely to be discovered and prevented writing. I only trusted myself, and then only when awake, not daring to have a bedfellow for fear of "giving myself away" by talking in my sleep.

Therefore when, the last day of March, I wrote "The End," I completely collapsed, in body and in mind—the strain physically and mentally had been too great. In fact, I collapsed before the book was finished, and I wrote four chapters, including the stories "In the Dungeon of Gud" and the "Legend of the Whispering-Vases," with the aid of stimulants when under my physician's care. He said I must finish the work by all means. Besides the ordinary medicinal stimulants, in order to do justice to the theme and plot of the dungeon story, I drank whiskey mixed with gunpowder, read Poe, attended dog fights, witnessed Sing Sing electrocutions, and visited insane asylums, and then borrowed of writers on the Commune in order to make the story read anything like the one related by the tragedian. And I wish here to say that I am indebted to the excellent work of John Leighton, F.S.A., for many facts concerning the state of Paris during that awful period. I frequently use his words.

I once told the story of "The Messenger of the Night" in Switzerland, and again in New York, to friends ; "Sweethearts and Roses" was sent to a newspaper man once for publication, but I





"WHEN THE INSPIRATION BEGAN TO PLAY FROM MY FOUNTAIN PEN."

never knew of its being printed ; the down-easter swore on a book "How to win at Poker" that he had told the pig story thirty years back, but not until I declared I had heard something like it before. With these exceptions, surely nobody will have heard any of these stories ; and I doubt very much if the three exceptions have ever got into print. Every story was claimed under oath to have been original with the individuals who told it in my presence, and it was with that understanding that I consented to compile this volume.

My friend Nick (he disapproves of Nicodemus, the name given him by his sponsors in baptism) had confided to me all along that he was on intimate terms with a leading publisher, who was under great obligations to him, and said he would make me solid with him just as soon as my wonderful volume was finished. He often said that Mr. Appleton, or Apple, as he called him for short, would certainly offer me several thousand dollars for the book without reading it. Therefore, after the book was written, and Nick and I had returned from a most delightful and invigorating imaginary trip round the world on the strength of those thousands, Nick took me to his friend Appleton.

I remember it was a glorious day. But, as I felt a little weak in the knees, we first lunched on angel cake, and then stopped in a drug store for a glass of seafoam, and then walked on feathers to the publisher's office. I fancied how he would receive us, honored as he would be by my offering him first my book for publication. And I had not deceived myself. I saw plainly that he and Nick were very chummy. Nick vaulted the guard-rail of the private office, and there was no formality displayed by the publisher. He seemed to have sat on fish-glue, for he did not rise from his chair. Nick proceeded to introduce us, treating me, of course, as the more important personage, saying :

"Pye, Apple."

"Apple, Pye."

We did not shake hands, however, nor did I sit down, as no carpet was on the floor. I felt disconcerted.

"You come from Boston, Mr. Pod?"

"No, but I've been there."

Then suddenly the dignified and scholarly publisher went into the adjoining office to translate a stenographic note for a beautiful typewriter, who gave me a winsome glance—and I awoke from my dream on April Fool's Day.

There will be no remaining doubt in the reader's mind that I am a dreamer. So vivid was the dream I have described that it made me timid, skeptical and fearful of publishers, so I decided to publish my book at my own expense, and be independent of the monsters of my dream.

To show you how little kind services often fail of appreciation, my fellow-partners of the blizzard adventure turned against me. Naturally I wished my book to be correct. Therefore, as I finished each story, I mailed it with the chapters of the blizzard story to the character who told it and asked him for his kind criticism. In several instances the chapters were destroyed, one and all, and heated letters mailed to me instead, denouncing my methods and accusing me of satire, libel, tergiversation, and every other crime and bad trait imaginable. Other chapters were returned so mutilated by pencils and paint brushes of all shades and colors, that I had to decipher them by means of X rays, and re-write them. Several members got out injunctions against my book and entered suits at law against me for damages to their characters. But I was dauntless.

Then came another difficulty. I have heard young married people pine and complain because they hadn't a baby, and then after they got one—or a pair—they were at a loss to know what to call it.

So with my book. After I had written it I didn't know what name to give it. I laid awake nights thinking about it. Finally I cut up twenty-six square papers, and lettered them with the alphabet, and shook them in a hat, and wrote the name which they spelled as I took them out of the hat. It read, accurate to the letter: "Kbzfaqcnpeysmdxtogihwvrjlu."

Think of issuing a book with that for a title! Nobody of sense would attempt to read it, thinking it to be written in the language of Mars—or Monkeys. I next eliminated the consonants, and shaking the alphabetical dice, formed the mellifluous title "Ioeau." This was more satisfactory. It struck me as being odd, unusual, and different from any other title ever given to a book. I sent it to the other members of the party for their approval. Alas! some people find fault with everything. Among my replies the Tragedian wrote that the title was too much like "I. O. U." to be popular, and the Comedian said that such a title was too vowel for decent people to read.

Finally one day, after I had given up in despair, I read a pretty love story with an original title, and at once the title I adopted was suggested to my mind. Then I was happy. My "baby" was named. I am now awaiting its baptism breathlessly, nervously yet heroically. If it isn't drowned, I shall have no funeral expenses; if it is, I will simply get another baby that will outmatch my first.

I mean to retire to a little island in Long Island Sound, and live like a hermit until I have passed the Rubicon of criticism; then I shall come forth like a bear in spring and snuff for wild honey.

Again, I wish to explain that my characters, to avoid additional law suits, will be known by their professions or the nick-names presented to them in the story. The comedian will take the name of Leander, and the widow (unprofessional) that of Hero; the down-easter and the porter go with the names of the Don and Sancho, and the artist will be called the Dude, even to his face, for he was such an idiot he did not even take offence at anything. Poor fellow! He happened to be the unlucky member of the thirteen. He has lately passed away, and I weep tears of crape-colored ink, in memoriam, as I pen these lines. Obedient to the doctor's advice on that memorable night in the blizzard, he allowed a specialist to operate on his adipose brain. The extraction of several superfluous thoughts caused him a collapse from which he never recovered.

The X rays, discovered the following day, might have avoided the operation. Blessed be his soul and may his remains enrich the soil and the art galleries of posterity. His last work of art was sent me by the girl who narrowly escaped being his widow. It furnishes the illustration to this introductory chapter, and though it slanders my beautiful form and classic head, I print it in absolution of my sins in assailing the artist's character so terribly yet so truthfully in this volume.

The illustrations for this book were originally drawn by the Dude, but all but three were destroyed in the "*grate* fire." The breakfast scene which he drew at the time, I have had to publish with a key, in order to make it intelligible to the reader. A careful examination of the picture shows the idiot sketched it at two sittings, the second sitting being when *it* was upside down—the picture. His picture of the dark room scene—"Where is the

lamp?"—is considered by leading artists to be a masterpiece. He copied from Dr. Johnson. His caricature of the author shows much improvement in skill during the seven years interim.

As a final blow to my untiring endeavors for my friends, the lovely widow wrote me, accusing me of coloring her story outrageously, and making it appear to be a true experience. She claims it is the subject of much underground comment in the coal mines about Scranton.

Before closing I must give credit to writers like Hopkinson Smith, Joel Chandler Harris, Townsend and others, for the types in their works which have aided me greatly in my interpretation of the language of the down-easter, the darkey, the Bowery tough and other dialects or types represented by the various characters introduced in this book.

Thanks, also, be to the clever artists who manifested such interest in my work and so truthfully portrayed the characters and scenes described within it.—Dear, jolly fellows, here's to your healths. May your palettes never get dry!

To be candid with you, reader, I filled the book with pictures in order that you might receive *something* for your money should you not deserve a place in the category Barnum alluded to when he said "The public love to be fooled." I have done my best to please you, God knows. I have rewritten by hand this book of over one hundred thousand words on an average five times, some chapters eight times, and, dear ladies, I spent six weeks on the Legend in order that the fair representative of your sex might possibly tell the best story (no thanks, though I really need the quarter). In fact, I should never be satisfied with the book, and would probably write on indefinitely but for my broken health—and pocket.

Banished from home (I was dropped from a second-story window into a garbage-pail on the curb), I spent the winter in Buffalo, three years ago. While there I employed my time chiefly in contributing to the leading magazines. I lived well and was successful—in securing a loan on some land-company stock which paid my expenses; *my contributions all came back*.

On my return home I was sent abroad as valet to my two sisters. While there I practised continually writing—for more money. I will drop the subject, but you see I have tried hard to do well by you.

Before closing, I wish to call particular attention to the advertisements which have enabled me to hire honest publishers. The companies, firms and *infirms* represented are all first-class, and I personally tested their wares before accepting their Ads. As for the publishers, Salmagundi Publishing Company, they are first-class and honorable, with faults like other men. I know the head of the house. He is kind, honest, generous to a fault, sympathetic and would not take a dollar from me that did not belong to him. I know the man through and through—I am he.

And now in conclusion I say, read and laugh, if you see anything to laugh at (I don't mean in the book), and keep cool, for we shall have a hot summer; purchase a box of peppermints, swing your hammock over a deep well or some other place where draughts are to be found, and—well, think of

April 22, 1896.

THE AUTHOR.

P. S. I am informed by the publishers that the printers have gone on a strike—and that only the foreman and the “devil” remain in office. The printing of this book is consequently delayed. Just my luck!

April 25, 1896.

PYTHAGORAS POD.

P. S. I am almost prostrated by the news in the paper that the paper mills have all shut down because all the papyrus rushes in the East have been cut down to make spear-handles for the Matabeles in their war. Blank the luck!

April 30, 1896.

PYE POD.

P. S. Owing to the receipt of two additional \$1,000 ads., and the consequent demand for space, I am forced to utilize the usual dedicatory pages for their insertion. Therefore, here instead, I dedicate this story to Hero, with apologies, and will send her a birthday present.

May 6, 1896.

P. POD.

P. S. *Latest.* I am utterly discouraged. A cablegram just received from Australia by the publishers states that on account of the recent drought in that country the ink-wells have all dried up. . . . ! . . . !! . . . !!! . . . !!!!

May 7, 1896.

P. P.

TRAINS THAT MET IN THE BLIZZARD.

CHAPTER I.

FAST IN THE SNOW.

" . . . As a little snow, tumbled about,
Anon becomes a mountain."

—*King John.*

ON that memorable and most terrible 12th of March, 1888, the Delaware and Lackawanna Limited Express, eastward bound, ploughed into a gigantic snow-drift and came to a dead stop. It was four o'clock in the afternoon, fully an hour before the twilight hour calendared for that day, but the raging blizzard with its density of powdered snow wrapped the earth in premature gloom. The floury flakes scudded by in fearful blasts parallel with the earth; yet gradually and imperceptibly the snow deepened on the level, higher piled the already towering drifts, more wildly howled the tempest, threatening with every gust the shaking cars, till it became apparent that the comfortable Pullmans with their belated passengers would soon form the foundation of another mountainous drift at right angles.

All day the thermometer had registered below zero. The intensity of the cold was an exquisite torture. The

weight and momentum of the ice-laden wind wrestled with the staunch and weather-beaten conductor with a sort of human savagery. The blizzard seemed to be the embodiment of some resurrected, fabulous monster of supernatural power, calling to his command the cruelest of the elements to devastate and pillage every living abode.

The conductor, conscious of his responsibilities and half unconscious with numbness, groped his way blindly, at times despairingly, to the engine to ascertain the difficulty.

The passengers had not had time to become disconcerted. Besides, many of them had run into snowbanks before.

They simply gazed out of the car windows and marvelled; and then they resumed their several and various diversions.

Some played cards, others read, a number were in the smoker, enjoying their cigars and listening to stories or telling them, or debating questions of politics, political economy, a famous scandal, or a murder trial, or prohibition. It was this last topic which was being ardently championed by a down-easter, who said he'd "as leave drink turpentine with a friend, in a treatin' mood, as that diabolical pizen what sent a million souls a month ter th' devil." It was an extraordinary statement for a man to make, but when he said that he had good reasons for making it, he was inwardly pitied by all and not challenged to furnish proof.

"When I run across a man like you," said a jovial commercial traveler, "I feel that I would trade my best bill of goods to see him dead drunk. Why, a cocktail now and then does a man more good than harm. You're a pretty weak sort of a sapling if you daren't take a drop without fear of going to the bad."

"I've heerd fellers talk that way before," said the prohibitionist. "They begin talkin' that way, an' then drinkin' that way, an' then goin' that way, till they finally get thar—hell."

"Say," said the Drummer, "I'll bet, if you smelt of a camphor bottle, the alcohol in it would make you see snakes. Come, I'll bet a V on it."

"See here, my young friend, what do yer know 'bout snakes anyhow? I've captured snakes that'd t'row ye inter ep'lepsy if yer seen 'em a hundred foot off. Hush! what's that th' conductor sez, 'Stuck in a snow-drift?' Don't let that worry yer; I've seen snow-drifts in Maine that'd bury a pine forest clean out o' sight. Why, I once went out on snow-shoes fer Christmas greens, an' cut off a half dozen ten-foot trees, I thought, close ter th' roots. Next spring, when I went inter th' woods, I come ter six trees one hunderd an' seventy-five foot high with stubby tops. 'That's queer,' sez I. 'I'll climb one ter satisfy my curiosity'; an' thar it wuz cut off by an axe, an' th' five others jest like it all around. What more proof do yer want then that? Don't talk snakes an' snow-drifts ter me."

Here the down-easter leaned back in his seat, stuck a number fifteen or twenty boot over the top of the seat ahead and another in the parcel rack, sneezed in a mammoth bandana handkerchief that would have set a bull mad, and then crammed his hands into his trousers pockets. Here, in an apparently blissful posture, he eyed his companions, as much as to say, "Now, it's your turn."

"You win on snow-drifts," said the Drummer, who seemed to be spokesman for the rest, "but I can beat you on snakes."

"Kin, eh?" said the down-easter, thoughtfully.

"You tell yours first," said the Drummer.

"Wall," said the Maine man, "I don't want ter frighten yer. I'll jest tell yer a gentle one."

WHIZ: A SNAKE STORY.

BY THE DOWN-EASTER.

"Gentlemen," said the Maine man, clearing his throat, "I realize my repetashun is at stake. Tharfore I'm goin' ter stick ter th' truth jest as I allus do. I think when I finish my snake story ye'll admit it knocks anythin' of its kind yer ever heerd. An' that's jest because it hain't fiction.

"Now, when my son wuz a lad I wuz proud of 'im. It's my the'ry that th' younger th' sons be th' prouder th' parents, an' that parental pride reaches its climax when th' boy is an hour old. *Then* an Equitable Buildin' couldn't buy 'im. To-day I'd shake hands with myself if I could trade my son fer a horse. I'm tired of asses, an' they hain't fashion'ble in this country. But I'm digressin'.

"My boy had a hobby—all boys have hobbies of some kind er other. His wuz rollin' a hoop. He had it down ter a science an' could roll it every way imagin'ble, except up a tree, an' that hain't imagin'ble. I bo't him th' purtiest hoops in th' market, an' th' market couldn't begin ter supply his wants. Th' reason wuz he had 'em stolen. His impecunious comrades what had ter content 'emselves with barrel hoops an' veloc'pede wheels wuz jealous of my eldest son's extravagant style, an' it wuz allus th' case after he had rolled his new hoop a week some young rascal would steal it an' he'd never see it agin. At last I sed t' him, 'Son,

jest because ye're my youngest yer think I'm goin' ter put up "cart-wheels" fer rollin' hoops world without end, but I've bought yer last hoop.' "

" Pardon interrupting," said the Drummer opposite, " but I am a little confused. You once spoke of your son as the eldest and again as the youngest. "

" Wall," said the Maine man, " my perfessor used ter say ' things ekal ter th' same thing 're ekal t' each other.' He's my only son; am er right er am er wrong? "

" You are right; go on. "

" Now, that same day I strolled out ter a marsh jest out of town fer some cat-o'-nine tails what my wife wanted fer decoratin' purposes. I wuz kneelin' down in'cently arrangin' my bundle when somethin' caused me ter look up, an' thar, behold! wuz a large hoop-snake, wheelin' fer me at a mile a minute. I turned a back hand-spring an' made fer th' woods, th' blamed thing after me. An' I'll be gum if it didn't try agin ter stick me, an' agin, an' agin, till I reached a sycamore an' backed up agin it, an' jumped ter one side jest in time ter let th' snake bury its pizenous bony tail in th' tree. Then I sot down an' rested, an' watched th' angry devil writhe an' twist about in a realistic serpentine dance, till I thought I had wheels in my head. What ter do with th' reptile I didn't know. I had read time an' agin 'bout hoop-snakes an' heerd people say they'd seen 'em. But I allus sed hoop-snakes wuz myths an' that sech stories wuz bare-faced lies.

" But thar, before my own eyes, wuz th' fab'lous monster—th' blue, striped, genuine, unadult'rated article, in flesh an' blood, as live as they make 'em.

" Sudden an idee struck me. Hadn't time ter dodge it nuther. Wished I had, though, 'fore th' sun riz agin.

I collared th' snake 'round th' neck with one hand, an' its tail with t' other, an' pulled it out of th' tree minus his pizenous weapon.

"Then I explored its mouth an' diskivered a liberal supply of small teeth. How wuz I ter get th' ferocious thing home? While I held on ter th' extremes I looked 'round fer th' means, an' finally bound th' snake ter my bundle with long blades of marsh grass. Our quiet an' orderly neighborhood wuz thrun inter a furror of excitement. My animate curio wuz th' talk of th' town. Yer see I put it in a box, an' my wife an' I thought we'd better keep th' box in our bedroom, fer the possesshun wuz valerble. In less than an hour after we closed our peepers we felt th' snake crawlin' over th' bedclothes. My wife spent th' rest of th' night standin' on th' mantle-piece, an' I hangin' on top of th' closet door.

"When daylight come, we looked for th' snake. Thar it wuz kivered up in bed, 'snug as a bug in a rug.'

"'Josh,' sed my wife, 'a snake of such uncommon intelligence ought ter be of some use t' humanity.' Sez I, 'Yer right, Deborah, it had.'

"The first thing I done wuz ter call in th' dentist an' have th' snake's teeth filed. Then I christened it Whiz. In less 'n no time Whiz wuz up ter his old tricks agin, takin' 'imself fer a bowlin' ball an' th' members of my sedentary family fer nine-pins. Yer may wonder when I say that wuz jest what I wuz hopin' fer. I let th' blunt tail strike harmlessly agin my body, an' made my son familiar with th' snake's ways, an' then one day I tied his tail ter his neck an' set my son rollin' him with a stick bound with soft lamb's wool. Yes, sirree; an' would yer believe it? in less 'n a week that reptile

appeared t' relish th' sport. At a sartin hour each mornin' th' little cuss would steal up ter my son, an' put his tail in his mouth fer——"

"Put the tail in your son's mouth?" interrogated the commercial traveler.

"Naw, in th' snake's mouth," growled the down-easter, "fer a spin down th' board walk. My son wuz in raptors. He had a hoop now no feller dared ter steal er merlest. Th' whole gang of young ragamuffins looked on paralyzed. My son's jealous companions sued fer his favor, while th' town threatened ter sue me ter rid th' neighborhood of its reign of terror. Now, it happened one day some scamp threatened ter hurt th' pet, an' my son sed he'd sic th' snake on 'im if he wuzn't purty civil, an' he did. My son made a sign what Whiz understood (snakes can't hear, so my son had ter teach 'im th' deaf an' dum alferbet), an' he put his tail in his mouth an' chased th' boy an' bit him on th' hand, an' that ended all an'mosities, except, as I sed, th' town's back wuz up, howlin' mad. Wall, it sounds like a big story, but it's true.

"Th' snake lived fer five year, an' but fer an accident might 've been livin' ter-day. As my son grewed in stater an' rekiored a bigger hoop, Whiz grewed also, widenin' his diam'ter until at his demise th' circumference of his wheel measured seven foot ten inches.

"But thar's an end ter all things, an' one fine day my son in'cently 'tempted ter roll his pet hoop down a long, steep hill road, an' 'stead of restin' now an' then as us'al, Whiz took inter his head a noshun ter lead my son a race. He jest kep' on rollin' an' rollin' faster an' faster, till he soon outdistanced th' winded boy, an', unable ter turn in a sudden bend of th' road, he went inter a rapid decline, plum-ker-splash! inter th'

river. It wuz a sad day fer th' family. We wuz all much 'tached ter th' curious pet an' mourned it like a valered friend.

"Now, some three months after Whiz's last wheelin' tour, I had occashun ter visit an acquaintance, farmin' it about six mile down th' river. I had jest sold 'im a cow. My son driv th' cow by th' road, an' I shouldered my gun an' strolled through th' woods. After baggin' a few squirrels, an' knockin' over a woodchuck, an' missin' a patridge that thundered up from under my very legs, I sot down ter count my game. Wall, sir, I hadn't sot thar more'n ten minutes when I heerd a peculiar rustlin' of leaves, an' 'fore I could crane my neck ter see, somethin' come kerflump agin my back, frightenin' me worse 'n th' patridge did. I jest fell all over myself. When I seen what th' blarsted thing wuz, I'll be gum if I wuzn't simply paralyzed.

"Thar lay one of them hoop-snakes, sure as I wuz awake er dreamin'. It looked ter me twice as big as my son's pet, an' I concluded it must be th' gran'pap of Whiz. It took me five minutes ter come to my senses, an' ten minutes more ter reach ten inches fer my gun. Then I up an' banged at th' snake, cuttin' him in two in the middle. What did the intellect'al ha'f of that reptile do then but wiggle itself ter me, an' curl up at my feet in a semicircle, jest as our Whiz used ter do.

"I thought I had 'em bad. Then it riz its head an' opened its jaws an' shook its little pitchfork tongue at me an' dropped dead. One look at me wuz enough.

"Then, fer the first, I recklected I had been stuck, an' had better make hay while th' sun shined else it might not shine on me agin. In less'n no time I had off my coat an' vest an' shirt, lookin' fer th' unattainable. Now, friends, I'll say right here fer infermashun,

thar's a spot in th' middle of yer back 'tween yer shoulder blades that's purty difficult fer yer ter see with th' naked eye. I knew hoop-snake's sting wuz pizen, an' if a feller's alone an' hain't got no whiskey, th' only thing ter do is fer th' bitee ter suck out th' pizen of th' bitor. Imagine! I can't describe what follered ackerately, but th' way I manœuvred t' get at that supposed wound wuz a hully caushun. First I sot up, then bottom side up. I twisted, an' turned, an' wiggled, an' screwed, an' grunted, an' groaned, an' rolled, an' turned somersaults, an' cut up a circus wuth a two-bit piece. Got my face whar my back head had oughter be, an' most broke my neck, an' feared of gettin' it twisted right agin, but I couldn't get my mouth within hearin' distance of that wound no how. If I had thought t' look, I fancy I'd seen a big audience of squirrels an' jay-birds crowdin' gallery seats on th' limbs of th' trees, an' coons an' chipmunks an' groun'-hogs galore watchin' me from th' pit in utter astonishment. I worked myself inter a frenzy, an' finally got my legs an' arms an' neck tangled inter a knot, an' rolled down head first inter th' mud in th' river. When I riz I grabbed a saplin' hangin' over th' water jest in time ter save myself from drowndin'. My body wuz bleedin' from bruises an' scratches inflicted in the circus ring what wuz carpeted with stones an' twigs an' gooseberry bushes; but, not feelin' any internal pains, it sot me thinkin' p'r'aps th' ferocious thing didn't stick me after all, an' then somethin' told me ter examine th' serpent's tail. It wuz blunt and spikeless. I next investergated its mouth, an' dropped th' thing horryfied. Its teeth wuz filed. 'It must be Whiz,' sez I. I wuz positive. An' I wuz his murderer! I seen through it all clearly. Th' thump on my back was simply a love-tap.

My old friend had reckonized me, an' that wuz his only means of identifyin' hisself. Poor Whiz! I flung both of him in th' river—th' river what my son believed his pet had drowneded in. I didn't mention th' epysode ter a soul 'cept t' our family physician.

"It happened, y' see, that my son wuz taken ill that same night. He coughed badly, an' thar wuz peculiar symtoms accompanyin' th' cough what wuz new an' strange, till wife an' I got frightened an' I ran fer th' doctor.

"After the doctor examined my son an' felt 'is pulse an' looked at 'is tongue, he called me inter th' next room an' questioned me 'bout Whiz. I told 'im all I knew. I wuz wonderin' what on 'arth th' snake had ter do with th' case. If th' snake *did* stick me I hadn't bit my son, an' while I wuz wonderin' th' doctor wuz thinkin', till he finally took me back ter my son.

"'Cough fer me,' said the doctor. My son nearly busted th' roof off'n th' house. Then a big bump of perfessional intelligence begun ter swell on th' doctor's forehead, an', turnin' ter me, he sed, 'Mr. Bjones, yer son has got th' hoopin' cough—th' genu-ine hoopin' cough—th' first authentic case on reckerd.'

"Wall, sir, it staggered me. My son rekiwered from the hoopin'-cough, but I'm thinkin', friends, that that illness, er my murder of Whiz, er else my son's long intimacy with that serpentine companion wuz th' ruin of him. He has seen snakes ever since."

When the Maine man had concluded his story, half his auditors had escaped, he knew not where. He asked nobody's opinion and got none. Every remaining tongue was speechless. The Drummer had, in his absorb-

ing interest, let his cigar go out. A man in ecclesiastical garb in the seat across the aisle eyed the Maine man with an astonished expression which seemed to ask, "Where do you expect to go when you die?"

"Eh? did yer speak?" inquired the down-easter.

"Nothing," replied the ecclesiast, "I said nothing." Then he added, "I'll let David speak for me."

"David," said the puzzled Maine man, surveying the rest; "which is David?"

"The son of Jesse," said the other. "Have you never read the Psalms?"

"You mean the Bible—oh, cert. I've read it several times. But—but I don't recklect jest what 'twas David sed."

"I'll tell you," returned the other; "'I said in my haste, all men are liars.'"

The stage now contributed to the equivocal applause which the Maine man was receiving, as an actor quoted:

"Great Hercules is presented by this imp,
Whose club kill'd Cerberus, that three-headed canus;
And, when he was a babe, a child, a shrimp,
Thus did he strangle serpents in his manus."

"Wall," said the Maine man, hardly gratified by the reception of his story, "it looked at first as if the sarpent had strangled th' hull of yer."

At this moment the attention of all was suddenly diverted, as the *vis-à-vis* of the ecclesiast exclaimed: "Hello! There's a house!"

There happened just one momentary lull in the snowy tempest, as if the warring elements had paused to regale themselves with fresh breath and vigor for a final onslaught; and during this brief period the conductor and this aforesaid passenger had discovered a building,

surmounted with a cupola, some few hundred feet from the train.

The conductor said he knew the house well; had often, in his daily travels back and forth, observed various members of the family who inhabited it. It was Monday; they ought to be at home—a much more comfortable asylum than the snow-bound train. But when one paused to consider the chances he must take in attempting to reach the house in such a blinding storm, he, for one, preferred the train. There were some there, however, who thought he spoke from selfish motives, for the conductor of a train, like the captain of a ship, in time of distress must not desert his post until the passengers in his care are provided for.

The engineer and fireman, too, must stick to their engine. He could not think of abandoning them to the fate of the blizzard. Besides, he wanted company. He had visited the engine and returned to the first coach with difficulty. Alas! the powerful iron steed was so firmly imbedded in the snow-drift that it was utterly helpless. The driving-wheels revolved as though the rails were greased.

Only by reason of the non-arrival of the train at Scranton could the officials of the road have any intimation that it was in distress—snow-bound. A courageous passenger, who had once been a telegraph operator, volunteered to climb a pole and signal with his knife for relief.

It was an exciting moment. The group of story-tellers were watching the performance from the windows. But the brave man soon returned so benumbed that he had to be assisted into the car. The pole, ice-encrusted on one side, allowed him no leg or arm hold. He only climbed ten feet, then fell exhausted into the snow.

While some of the passengers had grown quite nervous, others, chiefly the younger contingent, seemed to glory in the event and called it a jolly experience. The traveled few, who had visited foreign countries in all sorts of climes and under widely varying circumstances, and who by reason of their great experience were more mature in judgment and foresight, shook their heads dubiously and looked soberly thoughtful. The trainman of the forward coach entered the Pullman and announced that the mercury had dropped to six degrees below zero.

Looking at things with the eyes of a moderate pessimist, should they be imprisoned in this snow-bound train till the morrow, the engine would possibly have exhausted its coal and water supply in keeping the engineer's box and one of the several cars warm; in which event the passengers would be forced to extreme measures to prevent themselves from freezing.

It had snowed constantly all day. There was no knowing when the blizzard would cease. For two hours the train had been at a standstill, with no hope of rescue in view.

Suddenly the noisy excitement of the travellers was hushed. There was a tremble of the cars as if another train were approaching on the same track. In such a blinding storm a collision and awful disaster would hardly be surprising. The thought cast a shiver through the hearts of all.

Hark! A long, faint whistle followed by three short toots was sharply answered by our own engineer. Immediately a wild, ecstatic cheer went up from three dozen throats. All thought a relief train had come to sever their icy bonds. Alas! a cruel delusion! The gladsome echoes had not ceased reverberating through

the train when something of huge dimensions seemed to strike it forward with terrific force. It was a deadened, muffled shock, as if a mammoth pillow had been dropped between colliding locomotives.

The conductor, for the second time, went forward to investigate, and some time after returned, encased in snow and ice, to deliver the chilly news that the west-bound limited had fallen into the same trap as had our train. Thus both engines now stood up to their throttles in snow—like two mighty Indian chieftains buried upright and alive—fuming and panting, side by side on different tracks, and, as if things of life, each endeavoring to console the other by the sense of its own ignominious bondage.

This extraordinary event took place in an opening of the mountain ridge of Northern Pennsylvania, not far south of the New York boundary, where the unbridled winds had a broad and unobstructed sweep. At that time the prevailing elements, as though the Alleghany summits were not lofty enough, appeared to have allied all their forces to surmount the heights with a battlement of snow of Alpine grandeur—if there be such a thing as grandeur to one snowed under at night, miles from civilization, cut off from communication with the living world, and with ominous promises of soon being on intimate terms with the next.

When the snow-drift's later guest arrived, the jovial group who had listened to the Maine man's snake story and several other stories of Arabian Nights' variety had resumed their places in section eight of the Pullman, midway the car. It was the safest location in the event of a collision.

The commercial traveller rang for the darkey porter.
"Bring me a plate of soup," said he. "Make it hot."

"Make it two," said the man beside him.

"I'll take a plate, also," said the Preacher, "and some Boston baked," he added.

"Make it two," said the Drummer.

The man from Maine had not got a word in edgewise.

The porter eyed him inquisitively.

"When th' others get through orderin', I'll begin," he said.

"We're through," said the fourth man.

"Yer kin fetch me all yer got, an' what I don't like yer kin take back."

"I think," said the commercial traveller, "it would have been more generous of you to have waited till we all got through eating."

"I've seen blizzards before," replied the Maine man.

"I wuz reared down in Maine, but I've lived in Dakote whar th' dang blizzard hatches, feathers out, an' takes flight. Th' safest way ter arm yerself agin th' blizzard is ter put th' armor on th' inside. Fill yerself full, then put up yer dukes an' say, 'Now come on, yer howlin' blusterin' blizzard; I'll knock yer out in th' first round.'"

The soup came in steaming hot, and the portable tables erected in sections seven and eight presented lively scenes. But wait! the ecclesiast suddenly dropped the spoon he had lifted, about to dip in his plate. He was pale and looked confused.

The Maine man was too busy to notice it. The Drummer, however, at once detected the discord in the gastrolatrous music.

"What's the matter, friend?" he asked.

The ecclesiast looked up from his soup, his eyes staring wildly. "Oh, nothing of consequence."

"Anything in your soup?" was the Drummer's

second interrogative, as he thought of hair, hairpins, false teeth, and various things not credited to the culinary department of a train where only men cooks are employed.

"You may take this away," said the divine to the waiter. Then he began eating beans and bread and butter.

"I think this vermicelli purty fine," said the down-easter. Then he gulped down a glass of water. "But," he added, "it's too durned hot." Two others echoed his sentiments. Said the Preacher: "The waiter takes you fellows, evidently, for Meshach, Shadrach, and A b e d n e g o—fire-proof."

"You missed a good thing," said the Drummer, when the tables were removed. "That soup went right to the spot."

The Preacher again slightly paled. Said he: "I wouldn't have

touched that soup, after what I saw in it, for any consideration."

Then he breathed on the window-pane and cleared it with his handkerchief and looked out. A party of individuals, evidently from the other train, could be dimly discerned struggling along single file, making



THE DOWN-EASTER AT HOME.

their way with difficulty through the deep drifts and cutting tempest in the direction of the snow-obscured habitation. One could see they were bound together, hand in hand; had it been otherwise one might have been driven away from the rest, or have dropped asleep by the wayside, undiscovered. As they watched this demonstration of courage all pulses beat excitedly. A fellow-passenger in the adjoining section rose to his feet; said he:

“ ‘Good Costard, go with me.—Sir, God save your life!’ ”

I propose to join that party; if it's a night in the snow, give me a house in preference to a train.”

So saying, he unbound a package, and with a cord securely tied down his trousers over his boots and bound his neck and head with his long woollen muffler, and, declaiming dramatically,

“ ‘I have no will to wander forth of doors,
Yet something leads me forth,’ ”

leapt resolutely from the car.

He was immediately followed by his companion “Costard,” the group of story-tellers, and the colored porter.

The three women passengers and about three dozen men remained behind, preferring to cling to the one straw of hope—that of being rescued by a relief train before many hours should pass. The resolute party were all nearly frozen before they caught up with the strangers, but suddenly observing a female figure among them, the Maine man exclaimed: “I'll be gum if thar hain't a woman!”

Then their dramatic and daring leader swelled their courage by reciting inspiring quotations, which his

companion often responded to in thrilling strain.
Said he:

“ ‘Why now, blow, wind ; swell billow ; and swim, bark !
The storm is up, and all is on the hazard.’ ”

“ All is on the *blizzard*,” suggested the commercial traveler.

“ But,” added the leader’s companion,

“ ‘ *Omne bene*, say I, being of an old father’s mind,
Many can brook the weather, that love not the wind.’ ”

And thus they fought the elements, trudging on shoulder deep in snow and zero without falter or complaint, laughing, shouting, joking, like veteran troopers of Hannibal in an Alpine pass.

CHAPTER II.

AN ORIGINAL HOUSE-PARTY.

THE ice-encrusted, half-benumbed party at length reached the house. Where was the door? God have mercy on them! The snow had drifted against the house until one equipped with snow-shoes could have walked easily on to the roof. It was an awful moment. Judging where the door ought to be, they instantly set to work with their stiffened, kid-gloved hands to clear away the mighty barrier.

"The door!" shouted a voice exultantly.

"Help!" "Open the door!" "Let us in!" called the others frantically. Not a sound issued from within. The party became desperate. The terrible alternative of freezing to death finally impelled them to enforce the first law of nature, and, without a moment's delay, a half dozen mortals toppled, rather than fell, heavily against the door, like so many statues of frosted marble. Then sounded a crash and a loud rumble, and, amid a cloud of blinding snow-dust, six men pitched head foremost into a room of utter darkness.

"Bravo!" "Hurrah!" shouted voices without.

"Where am I?" "Where was Moses when the light went out?" answered from within.

"Will the inhospitable host come and welcome his ossified guests?" yelled a voice like a fog-horn.

"If he does not," added another, "we'll proceed to make ourselves at home."

"A sorry plight we are in," remarked another, dubiously. "I fear the consequences of our folly."

“ ‘I rather tell thee what is to be fear’d,
Than what I fear, for always I am Cæsar,’ ”

declaimed a dramatic individual in tones of condensed sympathy.

Cries of “ Rats ! ” and other plaudits of a nature not rodent, but more or less expressive, which greeted the Shakespearean remark, produced the effect of a challenge, and invited fresh displays of dramatic talent.

“ ‘ Are not you mov’d when all the sway of earth
Shakes, like a thing unfirm ? O Cicero,
I have seen tempests, when the scolding winds
Have riv’d the knotty oaks ; and I have seen
The ambitious ocean swell, and rage, and foam,
To be exalted with the threat’ning clouds :
But never till to-night, never till now,
Did I go through a tempest dropping fire.
Either there is a civil strife in heaven ;
Or else the world, too saucy with the gods,
Incenses them to send destruction.’ ”

There remained but little doubt in the minds of this belated company that two of their number belonged to the stage. The delivery of the actors, to be sure, was of an obscure style ; but the blizzard was to blame for that.

“ The tempest is dropping ice, not fire,” came the muffled accent of a pair of lips shivering behind a mustache of icicles.

“ I should say so,” rejoined another ; “ the North Pole seems to be taking a health trip south.”

“ For the life of me,” observed still another, “ but for the sound of my own voice, I should not know whether I am an iceberg or a snow man.”

Meanwhile the party were stamping the floor and exercising their bodies as freely as the contracted space

of the unexplored room would permit. The cold seemed to increase rather than diminish. Finally, somebody manifested sufficient presence of mind to call to somebody else near the threshold who had lost his own to close the door. The room had before been dark enough, but as there is a contrast between stove black and lamp black, the darkness of the house was now of the superlative degree. The frigidity of an Arctic winter, so painfully penetrating to these mortal bodies, added to the blackness of an Egyptian night so impenetrable itself, caused every moment to expand into an hour of bewildering torture.

" 'Tell me, good Brutus, can you see your face?' " asked the Tragedian. Shakespeare was inadequate for the comedian's feeling response:

" 'No, Cassius : for the eye sees not itself,
But by reflection, by some other things.' "

" I am a beautiful, alabastered, refrigerated ass to have deserted my lovely Gladdys for this charmless dungeon-keep. "

" What, man! " exclaimed a hoarse voice, " you didn't leave your wife in the train? "

" Hardly, my sweet siren. Gladdys is the poetic name of our comfortable Pullman sleeper, which at present is whistling to the tune of Whittier's ' Snow Bound. ' "

" Ah-h-h! " sighed the inquisitor, dolefully; " I, too, condemn my infidelity. "

" Anybody a match? " some one asked.

" Wait, I'll see if I have, " came the answer.

" The fellow sees, " muttered a third man aside.

" He must be a school teacher. "

" Or a vampire bat. "

"Or a potato."

"If he has a match we'll all see."

These facetious remarks were directly followed by the confused sounds of fumbling hands, scraping boots, jingling keys and loose change, which in turn were severally answered by despairing sighs and expressive soliloquies and ejaculations, sufficiently hot for the time to cause a noticeable rise in the temperature of the room.

Finally, somebody found a match—just one blessed, insignificant stick with a wee inflammable head; and when the lucky prospector announced his find, a chorus of voices admonished him to treasure it like a Kohinoor and other precious things.

"If you lose it, we'll string you up to the first stove-pipe," said one.

"Or the North Pole," added another.

"Wrap it up tenderly in your handkerchief and keep it dry till we can find something beside snow and ice to burn," advised another.

Suddenly, above the din in the room, and defying the voice of the ravaging tempest without, sounded a deep and penetrating voice. It possessed the compass of a trombone; and each word uttered took a different pitch, somewhat like the notes of a young "choirbird" when his voice is changing.

"Let th' nabob owner of th' brimstone mine," said he, "sit in th' corner an' fold his hands an' feet an' watch hisself. Dog-goned queer, only one match in th' crowd. If we wuz in a hotel, our pockets 'd bulge with lucifers, an' we'd be lucky if th' hotel didn't burn up 'fore mornin' an' all in it."

Nobody seemed to question the possible scope of truth in the remark.

"Heavens! hear that wind!" exclaimed a squeaky

voice, the sound suggesting a swinging barnyard gate. The actors were next heard. Said the Tragedian:

“ ‘And ghosts did shriek, and squeal about the streets.
O Cæsar! these things are beyond all use,
And I do fear them.’ ”

And the comedian responded:

“ ‘Cowards die many times before their deaths;
The valiant never taste of death but once.
Of all the wonders that I yet have heard,
It seems to me most strange that men should fear;
Seeing that death, a necessary end,
Will come, when it will come.’ ”

“A finished delivery,” remarked an appreciative soul in the dark.

“I doubt it,” said another; “we’ll have more of it presently.”

“Dog-goned unsatersfact’ry listenin’ t’ manerfactured tragedy,” blew the trombone, “when a real an’ more terrible tragedy is bein’ acted by ourselves. I’m friz stiff from heel ter fifth rib, an’ if I don’t thaw out soon, my heart’ll be forcin’ icicles ’stead of liquid blood through my veins, an’ p’r’aps roll a garnet ball inter my ’pendix. I’ll give yer a straight tip, gents, it’s th’ first hole I ever got inter that I didn’t git out er.”

“You ought to manage to worm out of this,” said an optimistic companion, encouragingly.

“I’ll congratulate myself if I don’t go ter worms in it.”

It was, by this time, evident to all that they were in a most deplorable predicament, and that the outlook portended spending the night on their feet in this arctic theatre, with the only redeeming advantage of hearing Shakespearean plays that were intended for another audience.

The actors, they reasoned, were so completely imbued with the spirit of their professional rôles, and such slaves to habit, that they were now simply proving themselves to be steadfast to their daily engagements, in spite of the opposing elements.

The next amateur actor to make his *début* in the play was a parliamentarian. Said he: "While the Lord-Keeper of the Privy Match fills his royal office, let each remaining member appoint himself a committee of one to find a lamp, or candle, or stove, or something. This house is habitable, if not inhabited. Come, men, to the front!" The self-appointed chairman spoke wisely, and he had the courage of his convictions. A startling thud in his quarter, indicating the telescoping of two faces, and followed by the loud report, "Hell!" indicated that his committee of one was in session.

"Armado is a most illustrious wight,
A man of fire-new words, fashion's own knight,"

quoted the Tragedian, with mollifying intent.

"Confound it all!" sounded an explosion from another quarter; "keep your claws at home; you've put out my eyes." It was the voice of the comedian.

"I ask your pardon," plead the defence, "I was simply feeling for obstacles. I now feel for you, I assure you."

"That's just what I'm complaining of. Don't feel for me any more, and oblige," replied the *mole*.

And the comedian sought refuge in the bosom of his patron saint.

"Light, seeking light, doth light of light beguile;
So ere you find where light in darkness lies,
Your light grows dark by losing of your eyes."

The turmoil engendered by the activity of the assembly in their frantic efforts to fight off cold and numbness was suddenly drowned in a loud tell-tale noise in an extremity of the room, as some heavy weight fell over a hidden impediment on to the bare floor.

"I've found the stove, dammit!" he yelled with pain.

"Hang on to it, then!" exclaimed an aide-de-camp near by.

And the maimed one added apologetically, "Excuse my profanity. It's difficult to be always *upright* in a place like this."

"One match won't set a stove afire," suggested still another amateur, in his first appearance on the (un)scene. "See if anything's in it."

His intonation was grave and dignified, even ministerial, and might have graced a bishop or chief justice.

"Will that bumptious owl that claims to see look in the stove himself?" groaned the choleric prospector who had struck metal, and was still nursing a knee-pan.

"Open your lids," somebody advised; "you can't see when they're closed."

"I always keep them open, sir, save when asleep."

"I mean the stove lids, you blasted idiot!" said the mock dignity. It was clear that he was not a bishop. The late speaker's diabolical words over the stove prompted an actor to respond as follows:

"Unkind remembrance! thou, and eyeless night,
Have done me shame:—Brave soldier, pardon me,
That any accent, breaking from thy tongue,
Should 'scape the true acquaintance of mine ear."

What strange and absurd events were happening in this room of ebon darkness can only be gathered from the remarks of the company. A soft, paternal voice,

lofty and commanding, now issued from its prolonged obscurity.

"Beloved brethren," said he, thus suggesting the Preacher, "pray let not your explosive passions precipitate a flat iron or chair into space, lest you break a skull, or destroy our only lamp."

"Where is the lamp?" called the keeper of the match.

"That I am yet unable to determine," said the Preacher.

"It must be a spirit lamp," observed another.

In accordance with a previous suggestion a stove lid was raised by an unseen hand; but as luck would have it, another hand, belonging to a different system, accidentally knocked the heavy iron on to the floor, striking in its fall a pedal of a human organ which gave forth a shriek of grandissimo that ought to have been heard in Scranton, miles away.

The fellow was at once retired on a pension which, according to his own arguments, the devil was to pay.

"The stove is full," said a voice.

"Of what?"

"Ashes."

"Kill that scoundrel!"

"Find 'im and I will."

It was apparent that the bodily activity of these belated travelers, though not altogether helpful in relieving their unpleasant situation, tended to accelerate their thoughts, and limber up all tongues. Ten minutes had elapsed. It was time something was done to alleviate their discomfort.

" . . . Let us presently go sit in council,
How covert matters may be best disclos'd,
And open perils surest answer'd,"

quoted the star actor.

"Brother hoodoos," came the reply from the St. George who attacked the iron dragon, *alias* the stove, "I agree with the immortal bard. A fire of some kind is imperative——"

"Inevitable," some one interrupted, "in this world or the next."

"I have listened to a jocosity extremely irrelevant to this deplorable situation," resumed the former. "We must do something immediately. We must keep constantly active in mind and body, else we shall fall into that calm and blissful repose which is said to come to those alone who freeze to death. Before we can build a fire we must find fuel, and, ere we can discover that commodity, we must find a lamp or a candle. Recollect there is but one match in the party."

(Sound of a kiss.) "We're likely ter have another 'fore we git out er here," said the trombone voice.

During the excitement the woman had been quite forgotten; but now this sweet accent awakened in the male contingent a chivalrous sentiment which thrilled them with a tender emotion and nerved them to action. The kiss, however, was only an imitation by an actor.

"I quite agree with the very sensible gentleman," said she, in a sweet though mildly censorious tone, alluding to the compromising sound and the remark which followed it. "If there were less *fool* in the company, there would be more *fuel*."

"*Vir sapit, qui pauca loquitur* : a soul feminine saluteth us," said the comedian.

"You are right, madam," pronounced the paternal voice. "There is no doubt that one or the other exists in the room. Command me. I'm your m—!!!!!! an!"



"WHERE IS THE LAMP?"

1

2

3

4

It was only a sneeze, though had it happened on the train one would have thought the piston-rod had been blown out of the engine. Place yourself in a dark, unknown room of a strange habitation in the mountains at night, and you will not wonder that everybody was hopefully waiting for the "other one" to volunteer to lead an exploring expedition. Thoughts of trap-doors, lurking robbers, and other gruesome monsters of fancy are sure to creep into the stoutest mind at such a time and under like conditions.

A door squeaked on its hinges, and the "trombone" voiced new octaves of discords. "If th' inhabitants of this homicide what are——"

"Domicile, man," interposed a familiar voice; "homicide relates to killing."

"Dang it! let it be domicile er homicide, it don't matter; we're killin' ourselves, an' killin' time, an'" (here he trumpeted his heavy voice into unknown regions) "if th' natives of this 'ere bungalow 're layin' low, intendin' ter butcher this unoffendin' cargo of refrigerated human beef an' mutton, I'll riddle their hides with bullets till they look like colanders. Come, porter! help me carry my guns."

No answer.

"Where's that black devil? He got off th' train with me. Porter!!"

"Heah I iz, doan' shoot!" cried the darkey, from the furthest extremity of the room. And the liveliest clatter of feet yet heard described a secant line through this arctic circle in the direction of the brazen voice of the "trombone," upsetting half the company, barking shins and loosening dental wares generally.

"Are yer 'fraid ter foller me in th' dark?" asked the "trombone," sternly.

"Not by no means, boss," replied the darkey. "Dis am de fust time I feel at home, sah, de dahk am so brack."

"So black," said the down-easter, "that I'll lose yer if yer don't hang on ter me."

"You forget," suggested a pedagogic voice, "that black objects are easier seen in darkness than are white ones. Naval ships are often painted white so that they may not be discovered at night by the enemy."

The self-promoted captain grabbed the darkey by the arm, and whispered in his ear that he had plenty of guns about him, though he hadn't even a toy pistol, and commanded him to make believe he had a revolver in each hand and a belt full; then, delivering in stentorian tones a death-dealing challenge to the moonshiners that lurked in ambush, he stepped boldly forward, followed by his black attendant—and an oath, for, as he planted his foot ahead, something extremely solid struck him squarely on the nose and felled him. The door shook on its hinges, and the volcano-like eruption which followed might have baked a snowball to a white heat.

"D— that — — door! — —!! ———!!! —! — —!! ———!!!"

"'Sweet smoke of rhetoric!'" exclaimed an actor.

Then, like a cooling zephyr playing over the ruins of Pompeii, came the familiar voice of the other actor:

"'Let us once lose our oaths, to find ourselves,
Or else we lose ourselves to keep our oaths.'"

"My injured comrade," followed the calm, reproachful words of the ecclesiast, "in whose arms——"

"My arms, boss," interrupted the darkey, grunting with his heavy burden.

"——in whose arms there is Herculean power, calm

yourself. Spare your tongue and spoil the offender. There is a lady in our midst who commands your respect. I am afraid you forget the fact."

The reverend, whose orthodoxy and refined nature made him recoil from the vociferous apostrophes and passionate conflagration which so suddenly flashed upon the darkness, paused to await the effect of his modest reprimand; and the Tragedian declaimed in a quasi-humorous vein:

" 'These earthly godfathers of heaven's lights,
That gave a name to every fixed star,
Have no more profit of their shining nights
Than those that walk, and wot not what they are.' "

" I commend the reverend gentleman for his suggestion," said a well-known tongue, " and would respectfully advise the fire-eater to recall to mind the noble fortitude and resignation of his Quixotic prototype, the Don of La Mancha, when he tackled the wind-mill. It would be wise to let Sancho go ahead, not from any lack of valor on the part of the Don, but to preserve his life for more honorable and worthy conflicts which may be awaiting him. He is certainly a bundle of resources."

This flow of adulation acted upon the Don's bruise like a magician's wand.

" Gentle lady an' gentlemen," said he, while he held his injured organ of smell, " fergive me fer indulgin' in a perfane dialect. It's one what kin only be understood an' 'preciated by a person in my condishun. I reckon th' most refined an' churchly folks speak in th' vulgar tongue. As fer m'self, I've lost my nose, but have found my self-respect. What uz once Roman in now grease—flat as an apple fritter."

The tenor of the speaker's words was sincere, but their equivocal etymology sounded as ludicrous as it did pathetic to the ears of the freezing and shaking sympathizers. A half-stifled undertow of laughter ebbed through the whole party "at sea," for the moment relieving their minds of the consciousness of their discomforts. In fact, this frost-bitten assembly quite envied the Don his warmth of feeling. His apology, too, so pleased the ecclesiast that he offered with benign condescension the suggestion that, in the future, if the exigencies of the case should warrant an uncontrollable burst of fiery enthusiasm in any man present, he trusted it might be done reverently.

"The word damn," said he, "should never be spoken except declaratively, and then, only reverently, gentlemen, reverently."

The reader may have noted, within the scope of his observations, the influence which the presence of a divine possesses over an assemblage of any class of people, however crude and complex its nature, the magic effect of which is peculiar to no other class of personages than despotic potentates, not excepting Presidents of the United States or Pinkerton detectives.

"But, my good friends and scholars," said the one whose voice and diction were adapted to a professorship in some obscure seminary, "who is to be the judge of our rectitude? I fear we should be very much in the dark in selecting a goddess of justice from among our number."

"Very much in the dark," attested another, meaningly, "unless the feminine lute that dropt an alto air in a minor key some time ago would pose for a Themis herself."

"A calorimeter," resumed the pedagogue, "is an instrument for measuring the heat emitted by the body. Unfortunately, the material instrument is in my laboratory, far beyond my reach; but if we will employ our imagination, we may adjust spiritual calorimeters to our mouths which will answer the same purpose."

"Something *spirituous*, to put a good measure of warmth into us, would fit my mouth better, and, I believe, better suit the majority," said the comedian.

"A rum idea," returned his brother player.

"D—— th' calo—what-is-it (reverently)!" exclaimed the Don. "I like th' deacon's idee best." Then the fire-eater wrapped his nose in his handkerchief, and, with Columbus-like resolution, again started on his exploring expedition into the "dark unknown."

The woman of the party, having listened with ill-concealed contempt—which had found a vent on a former occasion—for this prolonged comedy of errors, which would have better graced another time and place, now thought it time to assert the coolness and common sense which she claimed in herself to be superior to that of all the masculine drones combined, singled out a voice that commanded her confidence, and said: "Will the gentleman who spoke then, kindly accompany me? I believe *I* can find oil, or fuel."

"With pleasure, madam," was the prompt reply.

"But you should not brave unnecessary perils when strong men are at hand. Let some man accompany me," said the chevalier.

"I prefer to lend a helping hand to extricate this party from its deplorable dilemma. Come! *I'm* not afraid," she said firmly, touching his left arm.

“ ‘There’s nothing ill can dwell in such a temple,
If the ill spirit have so fair a house
Good things will strive to dwell with ’t.
Follow me ! ’ ”

replied the favored actor; and then, taking her by the hand, he led the way, with his cold right hand extended before him, like a chilled plow, to clear the track.

We are often reminded that a woman’s intuition is superior to a man’s; also, that she is more courageous in the hour of physical suffering. And it was the prevailing consciousness of these popular impressions which caused a significant murmur of amalgamated hope, faith, and assurance to underlie the confused murmurs of chagrin which greeted the lady’s bold proclamation. The shivering mortals remaining in the kitchen did not relish the idea of being outgeneralled by a woman. Unless they at once bestirred themselves they would be relegated to a shameful and insignificant place in the estimation of the active members.

But before any of them had taken a step toward amelioration, their sense of mortification was suddenly paralyzed by fright caused by a tremendous noise in another part of the house, sounding like the tumbling of animate bodies down a staircase; and mingled with human cries and vociferous oaths could be distinguished feline screeches and meows and spittings, all of which plainly expressed an unanticipated and wildly demonstrative meeting between the house cat and the exploring party consisting of the Don and his black squire, Sancho.

Nobody dared run to the rescue, for swinging doors, like revolving wind-mills, had recently been condemned. But immediately following this disturbance were heard the penetrating words of the comedian, as he yelled

loudly: " ' *Hell is empty, and all the devils are here !* ' " and a startling crash, as from bodies crushing through dividing timbers, followed by a heavy splash like hippopotami diving into a zoo tank. And several, recognizing a feminine shriek, hurried cautiously in that direction.

" I guess she's struck oil ! " exclaimed somebody.

" Thank heaven, we've discovered water ! " was the hearty rejoinder of the thirsty Professor.

The last unsympathetic exclamation caught the ears of the drenched man as he emerged from his subterranean wanderings, choking and blowing, and he yelled back, " I wish to God *you* had discovered it ! " .

CHAPTER III.

TERRORS OF THE DARK.

HAVOC reigned. The galloping, ice-armored blizzard whizzed over the house top, the wind howled, the eaves groaned, the windows shook, the blinds rattled; but all this commingling of frightful sounds was drowned in the deafening din of human cries within the darkened house.

The terrified and bewildered party felt that they were grappling with Inferno and all its furies.

At the time the first disturbance occurred, the woman and her faithful escort were standing on a wooden bench in a small room adjoining the kitchen, presumably the pantry, searching shelves.

The noise of the catastrophe on the stairs and the havoc it caused so startled them that they simultaneously slipped off the bench on to the floor, which at that point happened to be nothing more than a portable cover to the cistern, and the momentum of the falling weight of human anatomy, one body of which had lately registered two hundred and fifteen pounds by long ton table, had proved to be too much for it.

And now the frantic appeals for help which emanated from the drenched couple set the paralyzed auditors raving like maniacs. It took them fully sixty seconds to come out of their stupor, when immediately these lunatics began to grope about for life-preservers. One seized the stove, and was only prevented from throwing it into the cistern by the superior reason and physique of two companions—and the weight of the stove.

Although the cistern was only half full at the time, the actor, a six-footer, was nevertheless up to his neck in ice-water and despair.

The lady hugged his neck frantically, while he with a sort of compulsory chivalry clasped her round the waist, and so supported her shorter stature as to keep her head above high-water mark. Thus, in this inglorious situation, did our modern Hero and Leander choke and gasp for breath, and pump forth cries for help to the mystified land-lubbers who were tearing about the house at their wits' end, calling for ladders, derricks, life-boats, and other absurdities not "indigenous to the soil."

"This is not a United States life-saving station, you crazy fools!" cried the wet actor vexedly. "Reach us a clothes bar!"

The dry actor rushed up with a ponderous crow-bar which he discovered in a corner, but he fortunately made a squash of a companion with the implement before reaching the crater of the cistern, otherwise he might have killed the "wrecked crew."

"Hasn't somebody a tippet to reach us?" cried the lady imploringly.

"Who in the crowd has a tippet?" called the ecclesiast.

"I have," came the single response.

"Not long enough!" shouted the other.

"Fasten a pair of trousers to it!" cried the engulfed man.

The suggestion to employ apparel resulted in the woollen muffler being joined to a leg of a pair of trousers generously donated by a member too magnanimous to reveal his identity, and lowered to the classic pair, Hero and Leander.

As the life-savers hove to, there arose from the

depths of the cistern the tragic words: "Mercy on us!—we split, we split! . . . Farewell, brother!—we split, we sp——!!'"

But the last word was too fully charged with emphasis and water to be clear. The trousers parted company, and Hero, clinging still to the pantaloons, splashed back into the icy pool on top of the human step-ladder, instantly submerging him as though she were a tidal wave.

When Leander had disentangled himself from the net of feminine apparel, and by whale-like spoutings had indicated his whereabouts, he balanced himself on tip-toe and concluded his unfinished quotations: "'We are merely cheated of our lives by drunkards.'"

This not unmerited castigation had no effect upon the still demoniacal rescuers, who continued their discouraging labors in a manner to invite still further censure, which followed in forcible though disjointed phrases.

"If any of you idiots—have any practical—life-saving ideas—hanging from the davits of your upper decks—for God's sake launch them—else we sink!"

The fortunate arrival of the Don at this crisis of the disaster immediately reassured the company.

"Sancho!" he shouted, as he grasped the situation and a handful of Ethiopian wool.

"Ize heah, boss!" yelled the darkey beside him.

"Here, ye nigger, grab this tippet, an' when I give th' word, reach it t' th' drowndin' souls."

The word "drowning" struck the porter with terror, while the pathetic voice of the pleading lady inspired him with a chivalrous impulse such as he had never felt before. Little did he conjecture the perilous task he was called upon to perform. The darkness was full of life and action.

“ ‘Now would I give a thousand furlongs of sea for an acre of barren ground,’ ” cried the soaked actor.

“Haven’t you enough of tragedy?” shouted a voice from above.

“Drown Shakespeare!” cried another; “we can roll him into life on a barrel, if we want him.”

The Don was as busy as a beaver in its submarine den. “Here, some feller!” he cried, “grab th’ nigger’s right leg—two more hold t’ other. When I yell ‘Throw out th’ line!’ let ’im down head first. Do yer hear, porter? If yer let go th’ lady we’ll drownd yer, d—— (reverently) if we don’t!”

The terrified darkey thought his time had come.

“Doan yo’ let go dis heah niggah,” he cried. But he was at once silenced by the Tragedian, who thundered forth dramatically:

“ ‘If thou more murmur’st, I will rend an oak,
And peg thee in his knotty entrails,
Till thou hast howl’d away twelve winters!’ ”

“And,” resumed the Don, “when th’ lady has looped th’ tippet under her armpits, ye jest hold on ter it fer dear life, an’ holler t’ us ter lift. Do yer understand, yer ——?”

“Yes, sah, boss, Ize gwine do jes’ what yo’ tole me,” answered Sancho, nerved to the crucial test.

“Ready, boys?” inquired the Don.

“Hold on a moment!” called the ecclesiast; “somebody’s got hold of *my* leg.”

Dry actor: “ ‘Good boatswain, have a care. . . . You mar our labours! keep your cabins: you do assist the storm.’ ”

The error was corrected and the porter’s leg seized instead.

"Ready, all?" yelled the Don.

"Yes!" came the answer.

"Be brave, porter! Throw out th' line! Gently, boys, gently! All right down there?"

"Ya-a-a-as!!" yelled the darkey. "Haul us up dare above! De blood in my head iz combusticatin'!"

"He-o-o heave!" shouted the Don, straining his own sinewy arms to a high tension.

And mingled with the agonizing groans of the black squire, who was tasting of a mild form of ancient barbarian torture, were heard the gasps of the life-saving crew of six strong men, who felt that they were lifting nearly their own weight; for Hero's soaked garments almost doubled her avoirdupois, and the porter was anything but light, as we already know.

But the woman, though nearly frozen to death, was at last landed high, if not dry.

Then the diver renewed his plunging and yelling with increased ardor, in order to keep up the circulation of blood in his congested frame, and also to quicken his rescue. But the havoc he raised in the cistern only augmented the panic among the excited and half-bewildered life-saving crew.

"'A plague upon this howling! they are louder than the weather, or our office——'" exclaimed the dry member of the cast, thus emphasizing that "all the world's a stage," by dividing between himself and his unfortunate brother-in-tragedy the land and the water.

After a momentary pause for breath, the human derrick was again lowered, and the second number and gender was rescued to complete the conjugation.

Upon this masterly achievement in the face of what had appeared to be insurmountable obstacles, a hearty cheer applauded the "man of the hour."

"All praise ter th' nigger!" shouted the Don, with unblemished magnanimity.

"All praise to God!" said the reverend, "for without His tender mercy the poor porter would have pulled apart."

"Ize 'fraid sumpin' did pull 'part in me," said Sancho dubiously. "Daze a gwa' big hole in dis niggah's stomach dat wa'n't dare befo'."

"Oh, that's nothing, porter," returned the Professor; "we've all got that. You are hungry."

A battle had been fought and won, but the cruel fates were not to be so easily satisfied.

The two unfortunates had been recovered from the deep in a deplorable condition. Dry garments must be furnished them without a moment's delay, else a sure and early and most unwelcome death would come to their relief.

CHAPTER IV.

IMPORTANT DISCOVERIES.

"WE must fit some clothes ter th' wet couple," said the Don, tearing round the kitchen as if it were a well-stocked "modes" establishment and a clothing store combined.

"Yes," rejoined another, "the emergency is serious. Fortunately I am a physician; and I advise the wet couple to walk briskly about the room until we can provide clothing for them, otherwise their congested frames may collapse in pneumonia."

At once there was a stir on the floor, and the Don said that he would as lief have pneumonia as to batter himself into hash by forced marches and fox-and-geese chases in that black wilderness, and advised the wet couple to look where they were going. Then the Professor said he would contribute an overcoat, and the Don added that he would donate his ulster. "It'll make a ruther loose Mother Hubbard," said he, "but I reckon th' lady'll find it more comfortable than a Mother Eve."

At this moment the charity guild was enlarged by another member, whose familiar accent identified him as one of the most cheerful and buoyant souls of the party.

"Fellows," said he, "this is no time for formal introductions. 'I'm one of those nomadic creatures popularly known as drummers.'"

"There must be a whole band among us," inter-

rupted the dry actor. "We discovered a tutor some time ago."

"Yes, I'm a drummer, selling a popular line of corsets"—and here the idea struck the crafty salesman that he might indirectly profit by the advertisement—"the Three C's, or Cape Cod Corset. I luckily have a few samples in my bag somewhere in this cold-storage warehouse, and although they are too elaborate and expensive for ordinary wear, being manufactured especially for brides, I freely and most respectfully donate any or all of them to the brave and unfortunate lady." (Sensation.)



THE JOLLY DRUMMER.

"I thank you, sir," returned Hero, wheezing, and with a pitiful tremor to her words; "but really I cannot attire myself wholly in corsets. One will do."

Then, above the sound of the Drummer's scuffling across the floor in quest of his sample case, was heard the Tragedian's classic voice:

"We number nothing that we spend for you ;
Our duty is so rich, so infinite,
That we may do it still without accompt.
Vouchsafe to show the sunshine of your face,
That we, like savages, may worship it."

There were some who heard this fine elocution but imperfectly, for the agile Drummer collided with the

porter, kicking him in the shins, a darkey's tender spot, and so converted the semi-peaceful habitation into a howling wilderness.

The by-this-time-dilapidated porter sat on the floor and rubbed his shins and performed various agonizing feats of contortion such as would have done credit to a boa-constrictor. And then the wet actor in his mysterious manœuvres of black art fell prostrate over him, and in turn with his own feet upset the unoffending pedagogue, who was standing by, mentally absorbed in the mysteries of the proverb, "All things come to those who wait." The weight in this instance, however, was too burdensome for the sandwiched actor to endure without a murmur, and he sought refuge in the arms of Shakespeare, crying loudly:

"He is a very serpent in my way:

And, wheresoe'er this foot of mine doth tread,
He lies before me."

But it was only a step from the sublime of the immortal poet to the ridiculous of this very mortal comedy.

"Madam, would you wear trousers?" queried the ecclesiast. (Sensation.)

"Indeed, I would, most gladly," came the response.

No others spoke. It was a *trying* moment. Hero noted the silence, and considering she had broken the ice—more than once on this occasion—decided to follow up her advantage. "Will not some gentleman kindly loan me his trousers?"

And the tune "Most certainly" was sung by a double quartette.

"I wuz 'fraid I might offend yer," said the down-easter, "if I offered yer mine, fer I take th' largest size. I reckon one pant leg 'd make a hull skirt."

"Just what I most need," said Hero, through the

vibrations of chattering teeth, "and two skirts will be none too many."

"Somebody bar the entrance to that pantry containing the ice pond," called a well-known voice, "and let us avoid possible dispute over riparian ownership."

Now, the Don had had considerable dealings in real estate involving questions of law, and he detected at once the legal phrase "riparian ownership." Said he, "That idee comes from a legal mind, I reckon. Now, suppose yer practice a little at th' bar right here an' dam th' doorway with yer own hulk."

"I much prefer to sit on the bench, thank you," returned the attorney, in tired but courtly accents which were half drowned in the sound of a slamming door. It was only the Don who had met with another casualty. "Yes," the latter stormed forth, "dam th' doorway! dam every thin'! Let nothin' in this d—hole remain undammed. Th' only normal featers I have left ter my head 're my ears an' they 're like friz clams."

Excepting this howling "bell buoy" the sea was comparatively quiet.

While his honor, the Court, groped his unreliable course towards the "devil's punch bowl," the comedian said, "'Come, Jaquenetta, away,'" and led the shivering and half-frozen woman to the doorway of the partially explored sitting-room.

As I now recall to mind that awful experience I marvel how we managed to find our way about in the Stygian darkness so as to accomplish anything but self-destruction; but we did. Our ears, after a time, became so acute that they quite effectually answered for loss of sight, so far as the movements of the company were concerned. But, as for inanimate objects, we had to depend wholly upon the sense of touch.

Hero bore on one arm the Don's heavy ulster, while her escort, in sounding the perilous passage, reached forth a hand and seized a hidden derelict by the whiskers, and stuck another into the open mouth of an apparently paralyzed individual, who for the first let himself be heard by the exclamation, "Confound it! It's me, doncher know!"

"What was that animal I just heard?" asked the Drummer. "Have we a menagerie here, too?"

"It sounded like an ass," said Leander. "Now we have a circus complete."

"Fair sir, God save you! Where is the princess?" asked the dry actor.

"Gone to her tent: please it your majesty," replied Leander, beginning to disrobe.

"I must take a garment to her," said the other.

Said Leander, "'Stay! Lend thy hand. And pluck my magic garment from me.'" For the poor fellow discovered his habitual celerity in changing costumes on the stage to be of little avail in his present predicament. Hero, however, appeared to have had better luck in doffing her clinging apparel, and she called presently, "Will some gentleman kindly hand me a towel?"

"Sorry to say, madam, this is Monday, and all the towels are in the wash," said the Doctor dryly. "Here is my silk muffler, though," he added; and the medical profession made a notable advance in the field of science by walking part way through an actor, whose only exclamation was,

"O, what a time have you chose out, brave Caius,
To wear a kerchief?"

Neither was killed.

Meanwhile the sales agent of the Three C's had had

a hard time of it tracing his wares, but he now scraped across the room with three sizes of his specialty in hand, and said, "Madam, here are your corsets."

"And here is my knit smoking jacket," called the Lawyer, who was gradually recovering his sanity; "I forgot that I had it on."

"An' my breeches," added the Don, his voice trembling from the shock caused by the sudden change of temperature that encompassed his limbs.

"Just what I most wish now," called Hero hoarsely. And the dry actor at once broke forth in adulatory rhymes:

"Sweet health and fair desires consort your grace!
Thine own wish wish I thee in every place!"

"I wish I could loan th' lady a pair of socks, too," added the Don regretfully, "but I don't wear 'em."

The woman seemed to monopolize the benefactions of the charity society, greatly to the despair of Leander, who, finding himself utterly forgotten, hinted that he was as barren as a dead fig-tree.

Then the Don called the attention of all to their gross negligence of the suffering wet actor, and said that if every man would just sacrifice a single article of clothing he wouldn't die, and both the "drowned rats" might be saved from a death cold.

The Don's appeal was answered.

"Here's a single article," said a familiar voice; "it will fit the gentleman."

"And here is a double article that may in this extremity be acceptable to the madam," added another deferentially. "You see I am one of the stockholders of the D. L. & W. Railroad, and my conscience, under

the circumstances, prompts me to declare a dividend. This is a time for even a prude to be sensible."

Leander here reminded the railroad man that if he were as frozen as the lady was, he would think it about time to be insensible. He was right.

"I would most gladly donate *my* trousers stock," observed the ecclesiast, "but unfortunately it declared a dividend some time ago. One-half is being watered—in the cistern; and I manage to manipulate the remainder so as to support me, by changing it back and forth from one limb to the other. Here are my shoes for the madam." But just then the Preacher, in balancing on one leg, caught his raised foot in the rip of the lone trouser-leg and fell, tripping up the Professor and causing him to demonstrate by a complete somersault on the floor the geometrical theorem, "If a straight line is tangent to a circle, etc."

"And how are *you* drying yourself, Leander?" inquired the railroad magnate.

"Oh," replied the shivering actor with considerable friction in his voice, "I am managing it by rolling myself with a plush pincushion I found on the mantle; I expect to shine like a silk hat shortly." And then with a very expressive "Ouch! dammit!" the afflicted comedian extracted a pin from the velvet-covered ball of sawdust and added feelingly, "But it is a rôle I hope never to have to act in again."

The furious blizzard with its moaning wind without fell so frigidly upon the ears of the scantily clad assemblage as to nearly freeze their imagination, and thus it naturally created a sensation when the Drummer announced that he was struck with an idea.

"Friends and fellow walruses," said he, "instead of further exposing our already chilled frames by each sac-

rificing a garment, why not let two do all the commissary business for the rescued couple. There must be beds in the house. If we can procure one, two fellows may strip and jump in. Bed clothes are warmer than those we wear; besides, then all may keep warm."

"A very sensible but tardy suggestion," observed the Doctor, "which ought to have been made before. If our valorous explorer, the Don, will lead an expedition to the upper regions and obtain a bed, I will gladly volunteer to get in it with the rescued man. He must necessarily have been precipitated into a somewhat precarious condition, and the '*cisternal*' exposure may possibly engender serious *internal* consequences."

"A pity," remarked the Lawyer, "that there isn't a second woman in the party to be Hero's companion, for we might find two beds."

"Oh," said Hero, "don't be solicitous about me. My condition is not so delicate as to require a nurse; in fact, I can endure as much as any of you. I got myself into this fix and I intend to get out of it."

The Don with three companions, including the porter, proceeded up-stairs; others began diligently to search the down-stairs rooms for something of an igniferous nature. Hero, enveloped in contributions from eight male wardrobes besides a pair of corsets, rocked in an easy chair that was decidedly uneasy, without a murmur of complaint, but entertaining warm reflections on the comforts of a home fireside, and mentally debating the question of the fate of the female passengers she deserted in the train.

"I've found a lamp!" called a voice, suddenly; and a half dozen pairs of feet rushed across the floor to hug it.

"Where?" interrogated the railroad man.

"I expect it's another spirit lamp," remarked the Doctor.

"The same man discovered the other one," said the divine; "he must be a freethinker."

But there was really no delusion about it. Three individuals confirmed the report by claspings the dear thing lovingly in their hands; and I have gathered since from good authority that one fellow actually kissed it. Of course, he denies it.

"It's so! it's so! we've found a real lamp!" cried the Professor excitedly, as if he were a college Fresh.

"Where's the man with the match?" called the ecclesiast, in a mood to preach on the text "Let there be light."

"Regret to say *I* am the culprit," said Leander sorrowfully. "I—I—I am afraid the maelstrom was too much for it—the water too wet; but I'll investigate."

"Confound the luck!" exclaimed a familiar voice, "why didn't you keep to your post? I'll be darned if this experience to-night doesn't beat my first day's adventures as a reporter all hollow. Well, boys, I guess we can stand it if Leander can. He allowed himself to be mustered out, and he ought to smart for it."

"Well! well!! well!!!" ejaculated the railroad man, "where in the name of—the blizzard did you hail from? Been writing us up for the papers, eh? How do you like it here, anyhow? Just let me give you a pointer; call your article 'All in a Refrigerator,' or 'A Romance of Icicles,' or 'The Marvellous Adventures of a Party of Mundanes in the Infernal Regions,'—no, that's a hot place,—say, 'A Trip to the Moon by the D. L. & W. Limited'—very limited, everything; and very fast—in the snow."

Leander's handkerchief was a good match for the down-easter's voice: it savored strongly of brimstone. When he announced the fact that the match was waterlogged, the despondency of the company was touchingly emphasized by such exclamations as, "Alas!" "What now!" "Mercy!" "For Heaven's sake!" "We are lost!" "D— the luck!"

"Cheer up," said the Professor; "remember the truism, 'It is always darkest just before dawn.'"

And the complaining actor called to the uncomplaining woman, "'Patience, good lady! Comfort, gentle Constance!'" And soon a jubilant shout from the floor above reverberated through the house, proclaiming the discovery of a candle and matches, and there was a general rejoicing. Almost everybody on both floors embraced the opportunity and each other. The Professor hugged the stovepipe all out of gear, which *I* can testify to, and the Tragedian, who discovered the candle, affirms on a Mormon hymnal that the Don actually kissed the porter, forgetting for the time that Hero had remained below. Besides, the darkey uttered some very compromising words, which showed he was particular as to who osculated him. If I were he, I, too, should be fastidious.

Now a faint glimmer of light flecked the staircase and streamed into the sitting-room, and as the porter held the candle over the balusters Hero saw it and rushed into the hall.

"Oh, Mr. Don," she said, "the lamp feels empty. Can't you find another one?"

"Naw," answered the Don, "an' only an inch o' taller in th' stick, too. But thar's one blarsted room bolted so tight we can't bust it open. Reckon we'll have ter tackle it with th' crow-bar. Got a bed, though,

else I'm dreamin'. An' quilts as crazy as we've been, an' a eeder-down piller, er I've lost my sense of feelin'."

Then Hero asked him to toss her a match, as there might be a little oil remaining in the lamp, and the Don had to disappoint her. And when his eyes noted her comely features, disfigured though she was by an incongruous and most disenchanting masculine attire, his vexation had no bounds.

"Naw, not a match left," said he, "dog-goned these comet parler matches! Had but two—one snapped an' flew inter space, an' t' other lighted this."

Meanwhile the down-easter descended the stairs, and now, as he held the flame of the candle close to the burner, Hero with great care lifted the lamp chimney and turned the wick. Alas! it would not ignite. Hero sighed. The Don grunted. "What in creation *is* this danged hole?" he stormed. "When I left th' train I took this fer a tavern, an' now I've got here I find it a cavern."

"You are a poet," said Hero.

"Naw, I hain't nuther; I'm a blarsted ass."

Hero advised the "blarsted ass" to make the most of the candle, as it couldn't last long, being already too short, and to search the cellar without delay and procure fuel with which to kindle a fire before the candle should burn out.

The explorer thought the suggestion a wise one. He asked the up-stairs party if they could manage to get the bed down-stairs without the light, now they had their bearings; and gaining their acquiescence, he nabbed the darkey and proceeded to hunt for the cellar door. Soon finding it, Sancho with candlestick in hand opened the door and led the descent on a very narrow

and rickety staircase, closely followed by his sturdy captain, the Don.

He had descended but a short way, however, when, suspecting that he was afflicted with an optical illusion, he laid his hand on what bore every semblance of a fowl. And instantly a tremendous flapping of wings so unexpectedly and shockingly confirmed the reality that the concussion of the air blew out the candle and frightened both men off their feet. Needless to say, they reached the cellar bottom with more of physical restraint than of voluntary volition, and the event was duly celebrated with a pyrotechnic display of fiery words which were plainly identified with the down-easter.

“D— that — owl! — — all ter —l! — —! — — — ter —l with th’ — — — owl! —!!”

The horrified darkey lay in a pommelled mass at the foot of the stairs, the Don on top of him. His mutterings were fraught more with fear of being killed by his enraged captain than with spleen from his personal vexation and sufferings.

“Dat ain’t no owl! Dat infernal roostah—w’at blow de light out wif he’s wings. Dat w’at done it! De blasted Shanghai roostah! I seed ’im all huddled like jes’ zif frosticated haf ter deaf! dat w’at skiared dis niggah so he drap daown heah in a heap—wid a gwa’ big elerfant man top o’ him! Dat w’at done it!”

As the Don preferred eider-down pillows to the porter for a head rest, he undertook to evacuate the cellar, but he arose directly under a cross-beam, and was felled upon the porter for the second time, making matters worse. The force of the eruption which followed may be appreciated from these exclamations, — —! — — —!! — —!!! — — — — —!!!! — — — —!!!!

Fiery epithets melted and shot forth like lava, and the horror-stricken black felt as if he were a mummy buried alive under the ruins of Pompeii from the fury of an anatomical Vesuvius.

At length, having concluded that he wasn't really dead and a mummy after all, Sancho proceeded to leave the earthquake region, and crawling to one side he arose under the hen roost, shattering the stout pole into splinters and greatly accelerating, no doubt, the heart action of the plumose creature's historic blood. Whether it was due to a sense of righteous indignation at his nocturnal disturbance and violent ejection from his throne, or the fowl custom for the cocks of the neighborhood to exchange civilities or expressions of sympathy on account of the frost, the rooster improvised another miniature cyclone and crowed loudly. Leander, having heard the disturbance from the kitchen, felt that there had been simply a little tobogganing for fun on the cellar stairs; but now, upon this new revelation, he divined the trouble and said:

“ ‘Hark, hark! I hear
The strain of strutting chancellere
Cry, Cock-a-doodle-doo.’ ”

The poor down-easter was nonplussed and badly bruised. There remained no doubt in his brain that the plumed night malefactor belonged to the domestic fowl family.

“Where is th' candlestick?” he stormed.

“I dunno—I drapt it,” said the porter meekly.

“Then find it, you black devil!”

Sancho searched about until his diligence was rewarded, and then, upon handing the candlestick to the Don, he was despatched up-stairs by the half-senseless



"DAT AIN'T NO OWL!"

and utterly bewildered explorer, who forgot that he himself had scratched the last match when on the top floor.

While the porter groped his way out of the dungeon, the Don sat on the cellar bottom nursing his bruises and muttering molten etymology, syntax and prosody into the ears of the mystified rooster. It was a condition too extraordinary and ludicrous for even fiction to devise, and could the absent members of the party have witnessed the sight with the aid of a light, they might have recalled to mind a popular attitude of the Don of La Mancha when clasping his knees and listening for the return of his absent Sancho Panza, while one of the actors would surely have portrayed his humorous interpretation of it by saying, with fine dramatic effect,

“ ‘ My griefs so great,
That no supporter but the huge firm earth
Can hold it up : here I and sorrow sit ;
Here is my throne (thrown), bid kings come bow to it.’ ”

CHAPTER V.

ALARMING CONDITIONS.

HOUSE Committees were now at work in almost every part of the dark habitation but the cellar, where the Don was rehearsing various selections from the Arabian Nights and the lone rooster was indulging in the Reveries of a Bachelor. Considerable had transpired since the Don started upon his last exploring expedition. With the bed were found several crazy quilts and the "eeder-down piller," and the furniture was being transferred to the floor below at the time he left with the candle.

The Professor, too, had returned to the kitchen for the crow-bar with which to storm the barricaded chamber in quest of a lamp. He and the Tragedian were now wielding the iron implement with all the mettle and vigor of a village blacksmith. Soon the door yielded to the force of this modern ballista, and the pair rushed into the mysterious room only to be repelled by a most horrible and uncanny odor.

"Cæsar's ghost!" exclaimed the actor, "there's something dead here, sure."

"All rot," said the Professor.

"That's what I said," replied the actor; "it smells dead-rot."

At that instant a deep and supernatural moan issued from the darkness and startled the pair violently.

"That's the wind!" exclaimed the nerveless Professor; "there, again!"

"It gives me a chill, wrap me with thy toga," quoted the Tragedian. "'Come! hence, Calipso!'"

"Let us search for a lamp. Do not desert a comrade," said the superstitious pedagogue.

The actor, having felt a door knob, was about to enter still another room, when a second weird and gruesome moan sounded from within and caused him hastily to retreat, exclaiming: "' Philip?—Sparrow!—James, There's toys abroad; anon I'll tell thee more!'"

Then a still louder groan sounded. It was too much for them, and the actor forgetting his classic text gasped, "For Heaven's sake, Prof. ! let's clear out; we're in the home of the damned. I just heard the devil calling us."

The frightened Professor half believed it, and in trying to beat the actor out of the room struck the chimney of an obscure lamp which was standing on a table.

"What's the crash on the floor?" called the Lawyer from the stairs, while grappling with a bed-post.

"A dance!" shouted the scared actor, as he quickly polkaed out of the haunted chamber with the Professor's coat sleeve in one hand and the lamp in the other.

"Fetch the crow-bar," called the railroad man.

The terrified Tragedian would have continued moving toward civilization had not the furniture moving-van balked midway the stairs, where a leg of the bed was firmly wedged in the balusters.

The crow-bar being brought, the five men pried away with might and main, while the actor, lamp in hand, huddled on the upper floor and exhorted them to work, with the words:

"Full warm of blood, of mirth, of gossiping.
Come, come; for thou shalt thrust thy hand as deep
Into the purse of rich prosperity,
As Lewis himself:—so, nobles, shall you all,
That knit your sinews to the strength of mine."

The crow-bar appeared to be of no avail. The Professor advised all to take hold and lift in concert. "Now I will give the word," said he. "One, two, three—heave!"

The balusters were instantly shattered, and the bed rose with such sudden violence and momentum that the five men, including the heavy Drummer, sat ponderously upon the steps. Then, with a thunderous crash, the overstrained staircase gave way and landed the party on the floor below. Pandemonium existed. No one in the house would have guessed that a howling and tempestuous blizzard was raging without. At this moment, Sancho, having just emerged from the cellar, was groping his way to the kitchen. His first thought was of an earthquake, and his screech of fright was answered with whistles from the snowbound trains. He went into a fit.

The actor on the top floor was in a fearful quandary endeavoring to choose between two awful alternatives, a yawning gulf below and a moaning spirit behind him. He looked back at the haunted chamber and exclaimed dramatically and defiantly:

"'Fine apparition! My quaint Ariel,
Hark in thine ear.
Thou poisonous slave, got by the devil himself
Upon thy wicked dam, come forth!'"

Then, looking down before him, he added:

"'The wall is high; and yet will I leap down:—
Good ground, be pitiful, and hurt me not!'"

and dropped astride the neck of the unfortunate comedian, who had rushed to the scene of the disaster to help extricate his fellows from the ruins, and causing

the injured member of the cast to act the villain by crying out in his pain :

“ ‘ All the charms

Of Scorax, toads, beetles, bats, light on you ! ’ ”

Then Leander, after feeling of his head to assure himself it was still there, groped his unreliable course to the kitchen, fell over Sancho, the Doctor and the Preacher, stepped on Hero's toes, and rubbed noses with a still wandering and mysterious derelict who squeaked—“ Gwacious! doncher know it's me ? ” and finally made everybody think he had died, by keeping silent for five whole minutes.

The Doctor and the Preacher were busy at the time trying to restore the darkey from the throes of his fit. Then the dry actor came along and fell over the “ easy rocker ” on top of the hospital ward attendants, making matters still worse.

The physician announced the darkey's disorder and received the actor's fitting condolence in the declamation :

“ ‘ Before the curing of a strong disease,
Even in the instant of repair and health,
The *fit* is strongest. ’ ”

With all this havoc and compound disaster it was found, after a roll-call, that nobody was killed, though Leander, whom the fates had not been content to baptize in the cistern, but also had afflicted with a bruised cranium, felt that death would be a welcome relief to his complicated condition.

The bed was finally removed to the kitchen and put in order, and the Doctor, who had left the darkey in charge of the Preacher, proceeded to administer to the wants of the afflicted actor. He carried in his hand a

small bottle of witch-hazel extracted from an alligator traveling-bag.

Out of force of habit and in spite of the dark, he asked to see the patient's tongue; next, after much vain search, discovered his pulse and inquired,

"Where do you feel pains?"

"All over—in my feet, arms, spine, heart, head and hair."

"Pain in your hair!" exclaimed the Doctor.

"Yes," sighed the actor, "it aches terribly."

"Oh, that's from fright," said the Doctor, reassuringly; "I've known such cases."

"Is my condition not serious, then?"

"Not extremely so; it seems to be a traumatic lesion of the pericranium."

"Great Scott! I'm doomed," moaned Leander.

"Are you a musician?" inquired the Journalist.

"An amateur. I play the cornet."

"Too bad! too bad! you ought to have learned the harp," said the Drummer.

"Gentlemen," interposed the physician, "you must desist from making facetious remarks calculated to disturb the patient's peace of mind."

"Don't worry about my mind, Doc," said the actor stretched prostrate on the bed, "I was raised on a farm. I am familiar with horns, claws and pitchforks, and used to play the devil when a kid as well as I do Mephistopheles to-day."

"That is encouraging," said the Doctor. "But you should not weigh the gravity of your condition with the scales of my professional analysis. As I shall not charge for my services, let me relieve your mind by stating in simpler terms that you have sustained a slight abrasion of the scalp. I find no swelling and but little

blood. There is, however, a large tonsure about the wound, which at first led me to suspect you to be an American papal delegate or Roman Card—"

"I know about that," interrupted the comedian feelingly; "the leading lady pulled out a keepsake Saturday night when I disbanded the company."

Presently, above the din of voices, a familiarly fiery, profane dialect was heard reverberating through the ruins in the hall; there, underneath, the forgotten Don was uttering incendiary speeches hot enough, it would seem, to have burned a hole in the woodwork. The fallen stairs blocked the cellar door, thus burying him alive. He was advised to be patient until a laboring squad could lift the stairs and "resurrect" him.

"He receives comfort like cold porridge," quoted the dry actor, grunting under the burden he was lifting. Soon there was a "give" to the stairs, the Don crawled out of his tomb and the stairs were dropped again. The porter, who had been relieved from his fit, was conducted to the main council-hall, the kitchen, which, on account of its stove though containing no fire, seemed infinitely more comfortable than any other room in the house.

"Doctor," said Leander, rising from the pillow, "I'm afraid I've taken my death cold. What are the chances of pneumonia? Or am I in greater danger of pleurisy or croup?"

"It all depends," replied the Doctor. "The symptoms are different in each case. I should think your exposure would render you liable to a bad case of broncho-pneumonia, but—"

"I kin give yer some p'inters on bronco pneumonia," interrupted the Don; "of'en used ter have th' bronco diffikilty when breakin' broncos. When th' disease

come on I jest rid a green bronco, an' by th' time we got through buckin' an' come ter a stop th' cold wuz a dead-goner, shook clean out er me."

Judging from the down-easter's experience, the Comedian decided it to be better for him to keep on the move. "Besides," said he, "however badly I may need the bed, I could not think of appropriating it to my use and thus deprive Hero of its comforts." Leander was a *gallant* man.

The lady was now heard coughing. Upon being questioned by the family physician in regard to her condition, she answered that she was somewhat worried. "I don't see," said she, "how Leander or myself can possibly escape pneumonia."

"Well," said the learned and cool-headed physician, "before you worry unnecessarily answer me a few questions accurately and intelligently, and I will inform you how you stand. To begin with, have you ever had gangrene of the lung?"

"Mercy! Doctor, not that I know of. No, I am *sure* I have not."

"Very encouraging," said the Doctor. "Well, then, now as to your present feelings. Do you feel any inflammation in contiguous parts: the chest wall, the lung, the pericardium?"

"I—I don't feel that I do, Doctor."

"Do you feel inflammation extending to the pleura?"

"I don't know, Doctor."

"Do you fancy any irritation in the periphery of the lung?"

"I have not the slightest idea, Doctor."

"Do you experience any phthisical suffering?"

"I am unable to tell, Doctor. I—I fear I don't quite understand you."

"I will speak more clearly then," said the practitioner, clearing his voice. "Do you feel any suggestion of thoracic aneurism?"

"I—I don't know, Doctor; believe not."

"Or any sensation of mediastinal tumors?"

"I believe not, but I wouldn't say positively."

"Or any hint of œsophageal disease which might provoke the affection?"

"I think *I* have *that* symptom," interrupted Leander.

"I have no idea that I have," added Hero, in reply to the Doctor.

"Do you feel any acute process like exanthemata?"

"I don't know, Doctor, positively, but I hope not."

"Or pyæmia?"

"I believe not, but wouldn't swear to it, Doctor."

"Or septicæmia?"

"The same, Doctor, don't know."

"Or Bright's disease in parenchymatous form?"

"Ditto, Doctor, can't tell."

"Have you any premonition of empyema necessitatis?"

"Doctor, I am utterly discouraged and don't know what I have, or what I haven't. Have you been speaking English?"

"I have, my dear lady," said the family physician, "and you have answered my questions very encouragingly indeed. You are not likely to have pneumonia or pleurisy, although I may say, professionally, many cases of pleurisy are wholly unattended by symptoms and are discovered only by physical examination during life, or after death on the post-mortem table."

"For Heaven's sake!" exclaimed the congested actor, "I hope *my* condition won't be discovered on



"YOUR TONGUE, PLEASE."

the post-mortem table." And then he shook violently, and coughed up an icicle as a result of his "cisternal exposure."

Upon the termination of the physician's most learned and technical examination of the lady's condition, he ordered her at once to disrobe and retire. He explained that the fortunately large supply of bed clothes would soon put her in a hot perspiration sufficient to annihilate any cold she had contracted, and that when she had completely thawed out she could resign the couch to Leander, who in the meantime should keep constantly active, walking or otherwise exercising, in order to keep his blood in circulation.

Hero resisted. The railroad man and Lawyer came to the Doctor's assistance.

"Yes, my dear lady," said the former, "you place us in a peculiarly embarrassing position."

"We shall, if we are spared," argued the attorney, "be held responsible for your life. Our reputations rest with our getting you out alive."

"We must, of force, dispense with this decree ;
She must lie here on mere necessity,"

added Leander, president of this artificial ice-factory.

"Well, then," said Hero with a sigh, "for your noble and generous sakes I shall obey;" and without further complaint she doffed her outer apparel and climbed into bed. Those whose costumes were incomplete rushed forward to claim the wanting garment, and the small heap of cast-off clothing administered new charities as diverse in character as they were appreciable in their offices.

CHAPTER VI.

A PREVENTIVE OF FREEZING.

THE rail breeds strange companionships. A more complex, assorted, incongruous company could not have been congregated by preconcerted human agency than were here assembled. All creeds, races, professions, characters and temperaments, the latter, however, astonishingly levelled by the cold, were represented. The party were constantly active from the commencement of their thralldom; and it was, beyond doubt, this incessant, nervous excitability of the body and mind which fed their vital forces and enabled them to effectually defeat the ill designs of the ravaging wintry elements.

The comedian at once began to make circus rings for his body's welfare, and, also, to force his mind through passages of dramatic poetry, saying:

“ ‘ As motion, and long during action, tires
The sinewy vigour of the traveller.’

“ ‘ Three score and ten I can remember well :
Within the volume of which time I’ve seen
Hours dreadful and things strange ; but this sore night
Hath trifled former knowings.’ ”

Then suddenly emanated from the sitting-room a most novel and curious sound like the ripping and tearing of heavy fabric.

Extreme cases require extreme remedies. The fertile brain of the Journalist had come to the rescue of the imperilled party by suggesting that they might derive

greater comfort and protection by rolling themselves in breadths of the rag carpet.

The down-easter was endeavoring to remove a breadth of carpet from under a slender coal stove. "Some feller help me move this coke burner!" he called.

"Can't now, I'm on another—tack!!" came the acrid response of the Preacher with a painful accent on the "tack;" and the good Samaritan who had loaned his shoes to Hero, whose feet in turn had left them for Leander's frozen pedals, sat down in the crippled rocker to extract the spike.

The superfluity of idle stoves was as much an aggravation as the useless lamps had been. The down-easter attempted to lift the stove single-handed. The Drummer at the same time was tugging at a strip of rag carpet beside him. As the hardware novice lifted his load of iron it keeled over and so frightened him that he voiced the yell "Th' stove's fallin'!" with such portentous terror in its tones that five individuals turned a series of somersaults in as many directions, some backward and others forward, with such finished skill that it was seriously regretted that the darkness denied their less imperilled comrades an ocular feast upon the exceptional acrobatic performance. The crash of broken glass and a significant scream signalled two features of the show. The comedian had put both feet through a window, while the rotating Drummer came to a final anchorage on the divine's lap. This latter feat was instantly capped by a climax as the overburdened chair smashed to the floor. Our condolences to the ecclesiast. The Drummer weighed two hundred and thirty pounds before this night's adventure, and estimating that he had dropped twenty-five pounds by his ener-

vating exposure and trying ordeals, an additional drop of two hundred and five pounds carried with it more consequent anguish than had the tack.

The Lawyer escaped through the doorway and was struck by the attitude of the dry actor, who exclaimed:

“ ‘ Why, here walk I, in the black brow of night
To find you out.’ ”

“ ‘ Brief, then; and what’s the news?’ ” came the query from the brother-in-tragedy, crawling out of the window sash.

“ ‘ O, my sweet sir, news fitting to the night,
Black, fearful, comfortless, and horrible.’ ”

The Professor, upon recovering from the panic, discovered that he had put his head through a cane bottomed chair. After relieving himself of this unnatural appendage he opened fire on the Don, but he, unfortunate man, was unable to catch the drift of the lecture—he lay half unconscious at the foot of the ruined stairs.

“ Mad man! reckless, wrecksome wreck!” stormed the Professor of Languages.

“ ‘ You are a gentleman of brave mettle; you would lift the moon out of her sphere, if she would continue in it five weeks without changing,’ ” was the Comedian’s scathing rejoinder.

The Don’s head reeled and whirled, and as his ear caught the word “ moon ” he fancied himself a meteor rotating with wonderful velocity through a roaring, darksome, frigid and limitless space tenanted only by Luna, himself and a million glittering stars.

But order came out of chaos, in time. The railroad man invented a very original mode of fastening the carpet on the person. Volunteering to dress his compan-

ions, he commenced with the legal profession and proceeded to tack on the tough fabric with a flat-iron. The first pound, however, mashed his thumb and finger—and the Lawyer's foot, for he had unluckily dropped the three-cornered hammer. The injured member could only give adequate expression to his misery by rolling on the floor and undoing all that had been done, except the damage. Apologies followed and the supplicant tinker was allowed another trial.

"Ouch! Pull it out!" yelled the Lawyer. "I'm not a railroad tie. It struck my backbone." The rail-roader again apologized.

"The nail is released on pardon," pronounced the Lawyer. "There! gently now—in my fatty side—hold! not that, my heart's there; try the other—there, pound away!" The deed was done.

"I feel like a rolled omelet," observed the counsellor.

"Stop torturing our appetites with such references!" exclaimed the hungry school teacher.

The other individuals had profited by listening to certain expressive remarks which condemned the old process, and advised the men to employ an entirely different one. So they lay down and rolled themselves in the dusty folds and bound them on with ropes made of the cords of unravelled carpet, or stood against the wall in order to prevent the fabric from unwrapping. And now, for the first, there was a complete cessation of activity among the snow-bound party.

"O, that a man might know
The end of this day's business, ere it come!
But it sufficeth, that the day will end,
And then the end is known.—Come, ho! away!"

This observation of the weary comedian showed that

he found the hours singularly dry compared with his early cold-water bath.

"Somebody unfold a tale and cheat the tyrant Time of his enslaving domination," suggested the Drummer.

"Domnashun!" corrected the Don, paraphrasing.

The Drummer began to soliloquize in uncomplimentary mutterings about the confounded blizzard, and finally became more outspoken.

"Friends," said he, "although my conscience is as cold as a corporation it troubles me. I feel as though I were the hoodoo of our party."

"How a hoodoo? Explain yourself," said the Journalist.

"To hoodoo is an indictable offence," remarked the attorney, "and the grand jury is sitting."

"Standing!" ejaculated a fatigued voice.

"Gents," spoke the legal authority,—and his vocal organ revealed signs of bronchial corrode,—"No person can be compelled in any criminal case to be a witness against himself (1 Revised Statutes 94, Section 13),—nor," he continued, "'can a person charged with crime be subjected, before conviction, to any more restraint than is necessary for his detention to answer the charge (Section 10, Donnan's Annotated Code of Criminal Procedure and New York Constitution, Art. 1, Sec. 6 and U. S. 5th Amendment).'"

"You have a head like a polywog," said the Professor.

"The memory of a Philadelphia lawyer," attested the Drummer. "But pardon me disagreeing with the ruling of your Supreme Justiceship and your auxiliary justices of the peace, but his Highness the snow-drift alone exercises restraint over me to-night. No code, statute, dictum or commentary can prevent me thaw-

ing out my conscience. I verily believe you all would long ago have enjoyed the blessings of fire, light, food—"

"And drink," interrupted the dry actor.

"—and comfortable raiment," continued the Drummer, "had not the fates hoodooed you by my company. I propose to proceed at once to thaw out my conscience and confess my guilt, and shall trust in conclusion to your leniency for a merciful sentence."

CHAPTER VII.

THE HOODOO'S ARGUMENT.

A STORY BY THE DRUMMER.

"WHEN the marriage ceremony knighted me a member of the order of Benedicts,—I shall not state how long ago,—I became the victim of a very practical joke which threw a deal of light on the blackness of human roguery, and into the street and my neighbor's windows.

"I was fond of playing jokes myself and had perpetrated not a few. But I believe in drawing a line in all things.

"Several of my benedict friends had complained at their nuptials of having received an awkward multiplicity of wedding gifts. According to the statistics I gathered, clocks and lamps held the whip hand and appeared to be in the ascendant. One friend had received eleven lamps, and a second sixteen, a third eight clocks, and a fourth eighteen; while another friend, a lady, was more fortunate in having her wedding plated, as it were, with silver spoons. She received twenty-six sets of all designs, shapes and sizes, and intended for every service imaginable, except, perhaps, that of spooning a child's tongue in order to look into its throat, and judging from personal experience any variety of spoon will meet the emergency in such a case, from an ear spoon to a soup ladle.

"However, to make use of the surplus necessitated so much mental inquisition in the confused brains of

the principals while travelling that the wedding-journeys lost two-thirds of their romance.

“ Thus, when the otherwise happy couples returned to town, the brides were required to devote a week or two of their honeymoons between leading silversmiths, bartering and bargaining off their superfluity of wedding gifts, until, finally, with the result of much loss of time, labor, money and possible impairment of health, they got pretty nearly what articles they *didn't* want. Of course, all this was generally of secondary importance. They got rid of the surplus; that was the main object. But all this was sufficient to excite the notice of a thinking man.

“ Now, while I am anything rather than stingy and mean,—I loathe such people,—I have always been regarded by my acquaintances as an exponent of political economy. I have, also, been a good observer. I now felt it my bounden duty to profit by the experiences of others. So, when I directed the wedding invitations to my friends, I just tucked into each envelope a neatly engraved card containing the following verse :

I love the tick and chime of clocks,
The lamp's soft light and shade ;
But Christ loved more than all the flocks,
The single lamb that strayed.

“ I knew that I was tampering with a very delicate subject. It had taken me weeks to solve the all important problem. The verse was original, it contained a very delicate hint, and I looked forward to a happy issue. Such an issue! My good friends, that original idea turned out the most numerous progeny ever propagated.

“ Luckily, my affianced wife had protested against

any gentle hints to *her* friends. There was no doubt in my mind that among my benedictine intimates there was one who should properly travel with the name of Arnold.

"One of my ushers praised my originality, and I received ninety-nine lamps and one beautiful silver candlestick, my best man's gift, which he said was just the thing for searching at midnight hours for paregoric, belladonna, catnip tea and soothing syrup. Nobody ever needed soothing-syrup more than did I at that moment and several hundred moments thereafter. I also received eighty-six gifts of all kinds—of clocks. My bride-elect was prostrated and I almost turned into a raving maniac. After I had managed with the assistance of three doctors and a director of an insane asylum to return somewhat to my original self, I vowed vengeance. I sat up all one night before deciding upon a feasible plan to 'get even.'

"I forgot to mention that among the one hundred odd presents—and some were extremely odd—which my wife received from her friends, there were nine lamps and thirteen clocks. I think that every variety and make of both commodities extant were represented in my 'ware-room parlors,' as my bride called my new residence. I had purchased my cage before I caught my bird. Under the very extraordinary circumstances, my bride insisted on having our reception and wedding repast in my house, which was larger than her home and would better accommodate the presents. To give you a vague idea of what followed, I might just mention here that there were banquet lamps, piano lamps, floor lamps, student lamps, standard lamps, hall lamps, gas lamps, spirit lamps, magic lamps, and other lamps; centre-draught burners, straight-wick burners, duplex

burners and other burners; Rudalstadt lamps, Baccarat lamps, Dresden lamps, Venetian lamps, Brussels lamps and Parisian lamps; oriental lamps, Egyptian lamps, Persian lamps, Arabian lamps, Russian wedding lamps, Columbian lamps, Royal lamps, Imperial lamps, Japanese lamps, and lamps; Rochester lamps, Pittsburgh lamps, Kalamazoo lamps, Buffalo lamps and Kangaroo lamps; sunrise lamps and moonset lamps; sunset lamps and moonrise lamps; enameled lamps, moss green, Nile green, pea green and green lamps; onyx lamps, bronze lamps, brass lamps, onyx and gold lamps, Jap silver bronze lamps, cut glass lamps, Royal Worcester lamps, china lamps, enameled metal lamps, oberon lamps, amberina lamps, frosted lamps, Rosa lamps, orange and rainbow lamps, opalescent lamps, Davy's lamps, El Geber lamps, Aladdin lamps, revolving lighthouse lamps, hanging lamps, and electrocution lamps, and more lamps; lamps with exquisite shades of silk, satin, paper and porcelain; square, round, scalloped and frilled; lamps with mica smoke catchers, mosquito catchers, moth catchers, bat catchers; lamps of all shapes, sizes, styles, colors and descriptions; lamps with—"

"See here!" stormed a deep voice, "let up on the lamp business! Are you trying to see how deeply you can aggravate this lampless community?"

"Well," continued the hoodoo, "on the day of the momentous nuptials I ordered every lamp to be filled. We fairly intoxicated them. We drained the market so completely that an oil famine, or drought, reigned for a week. Then I had every lamp placed to the best advantage of itself and the greatest disadvantage of the expected guests, in every part of the house, from cellar to garret, where it was possible for a guest to seek

refuge. Then I commanded all the clocks to be wound and their hands tied, so to speak, till I should give the signal for them to be simultaneously let loose. I noted which clocks struck and chimed and cuckooed and tolled, and so regulated them all that when one should cease merry-making its neighbor would perform its proper function, and I even had sounding boards of metal put under each clock that the sound might be more effective and penetrating.

"I desired my guests should feel that their presents, as well as their presence, were appreciated. When I marched up the church aisle after the ceremony my bosom swelled with a subdued, revengeful joy in the anticipation of the reception, of the moment when I should have my satisfaction. I noticed that my friends seemed to be inflated with an air of complete content in the conviction that his or her joke would answer a fair exchange for past jokes which I had perpetrated at their weddings. I even overheard whispered remarks about my remarkable composure and the mobile expression of my countenance.

"Immediately after the guests had assembled in my parlors, a dozen men employed for the purpose lighted the one-hundred-and-eight lamps, and unbound the ninety-nine clocks. The whole house was one blaze of light, and the clocks began a clanging chime which reminded one of how the bells of St. Bartholomew must have sounded when they tolled the massacre of the Huguenots.

"A hundred-thousand-candle-power-electric arc-light might have cast more splendor, but it would have caused less havoc. Our guests might have turned their backs on one arc-light, but to escape from the glare of my one-hundred-and-eight lamps throwing from every

fractional point of the compass lights of various colors—red, green, purple, yellow and blue—was impossible while they remained our guests. My house was one great Pain pyrotechnic drama, with considerable emphasis on the 'pain.' Women escaped into closets, bedrooms, store-rooms and garret, everywhere to encounter flaring lamps and a deafening chime of clocks or a chorus of cuckoos. The men were not less bewildered. They stampeded like wild cattle. Four rushed down cellar and into the coal bin, the only place in the house that remained dark. A dozen or more climbed to the roof. In the midst of the tumult the house appeared suddenly to be struck by a cyclone. It was the month of roses. The windows were partially opened. Some excited pedestrian on the street must have thought a lamp had exploded in the illuminated house, and rung the fire alarm. There were soon as many varieties of fire-extinguishers surrounding my residence as there were lamps and clocks in it. My half-crazed and non-plussed guests were so completely bewildered and terrified by the dazzling confusion of colored lights, hired music which kept on playing, striking clocks and screeching, crying, laughing, shouting, singing, talking, howling maniacs, that the engines, hose-carts, fire-towers, chemical engines, hook-and-ladders, patrol-wagons and ambulances were all at work before they were aware of what was coming.

"A howling medley of unwritten Wagnerian opera rendered by the dozen refugees on the house top signalled the opening of the open-air concert, and then the three shows united in the Greatest Show on Earth, and my fun began. While the orchestra played waltzes, gallops and two-steps in the parlors, the hose of a dozen fire-engine calliopes played into as many windows, to



"CANTATAS OF LIQUID MUSIC."

the time of lively quicksteps and fisher's hornpipes, such cantatas of liquid music as would have made a whale envious.

"My belated comrades, I have witnessed and listened to Samson and Delilah in the Scala of Milan, but I declare the screaming dago actors in the falling temple scene were dimmed into obscurity by the grand finale of my wedding reception. My handsome residence was deluged from roof to cistern, and garret to furnace. My water-soaked guests rushed, during the overwhelming pandemonium, out of my 'Venetian palace' pell mell into a 'Grand Canal,' calling and shouting for gondolas, arks, house-boats and sea-horses and carriages, but the whole raft of them were greeted only by fire-boats and cracked 'skulls,' and many were washed down the street with a flood tide.

"The smoking, sizzling lamps made smoked hams of a few hogs who insisted on sampling the wedding cake. The room was filled with a good imitation of London fog, the clocks chimed and cuckooed, and the wedding supper of floating-island and other delicacies floated down the front steps to the mob on the avenue below.

"'My *dear* husband,' said my wife as I rescued her by means of a spirituous life-preserver, 'oh, you come *so* dear! I feel as though a wet blanket had been thrown on my wedding.'

"I believe I replied that I had half an ocean to drown myself. I finally pulled her over the 'taffrail' of a passing street car, which I at once chartered to leave the track and float us to a hotel with a large open fireplace spacious enough to accommodate two. There we posed for a clambake. The car horses were nearly drowned. Luckily, we had sent away our trunks early in the day, and they were there to receive us. I *tell*

you we had a dry wedding journey. My bride was so disgusted with me and I with myself, that for the first week we only managed to cool our arid tempers with cracked ice; as for talking, we only spoke in the sign language. Of course, affairs got righted in time. Letters from home said that the house was still standing. This was cheering; I daily expected to hear of its being passed at sea by some incoming steamer, and watched the shipping news constantly.

“ Now, for a conclusive argument in behalf of my claims as a hoodoo, I will add that from that day to this I never have lighted a lamp in my own house except on two occasions. In both instances I pitched them out of the window in an about-to-explode condition. I am never invited to the homes of friends, where some lamp does not burn out, or a chimney break, or the lamp upset accidentally and throw the household into a panic. As for indulging in rhymes thereafter, I took a solemn oath that I would never again seek refuge in the Muse.”

When the Drummer had concluded his astonishing narrative, his half-paralyzed auditors averred *viva voce* that he was most conclusively a hoodoo.



THE DUDE.

CHAPTER VIII.

AN ORIGINAL MODE OF HEATING.

UPON the conclusion of the Hoodoo's story, the court opened in special term.

"Your evidence," remarked the Preacher, "is as convincing as it is convicting."

Said Leander, in solemn tones,

" 'Sir, I will pronounce your sentence ;
You shall fast a week with bran and water.' "

"I beseech my attorney to appeal my case and procure a stay," said the railroad man.

"Your stay is granted by Judge Blizzard of this circuit," pronounced the Journalist.

"Your attorney," added the Lawyer, "has found that 'An Act requiring parties to make discovery on oath concerning an indictable offense, but forbidding the answers from being used in evidence against him, is constitutional. See *Perrine against Striker*, 7 Paige, 598.' "

"You," said the Drummer, "are a fictitious Lawyer, improvising for the occasion, or else you have the largest burl of memory ever inherited by man since the time of Pitt. Think of even remembering the *page*!"

"You speak truly," said the Lawyer. "Pardon my digressing from my usual modesty, but my remarkable memory is all I have to my credit—and debit, too, for there are many things a practitioner at the bar would fain forget if he could."

"No doubt about it," commented Hero. "I have had dealings with lawyers myself."

"I am descended from a remarkable race," continued the counsellor. "My father's great uncle married an aunt of the step-niece of the brother-in-law of Lord Macaulay's mother's half-sister, and everybody acquainted with the historian's life knows of his enormous memory. It is recorded that he could go down one side of the Strand and back on the other, and repeat from memory in their order the names of all the shop-signs from beginning to end."

"Well (hic)," said the comedian, who at the moment suffered from hiccoughs which unfortunately placed him in a false light with his fellows, who wondered where he had found the liquor; "if they were all grog shops (hic), I could too. Per- (hic) haps those shops were (hic) grog shops; the old writers used t' (hic) to know the haunts pretty well in (hic) those days."

"Cork up there!" called his brother-in-comedy.

"Put that word 'hic' in another gender," said the divine.

"Or another case," suggested the dry actor; "I order a case of hock."

"Yes; put your voice in hock," said the Journalist.

"The pan-hic-ky individual," observed the Profes-

sor, "is murdering his Latin, or else he has found a bottle."

"I assure you, Prof. Pedagogue," returned the maligned player, "I (hic) have only the h- (hic) ups, I regret to say; I wish I *had* a bottle."

"I can't stand this any longer," said the Drummer hoarsely; "when pipes freeze they burst. My bronchial tubes are in that condition now;" and so saying, he left his seat and walked about the room.

"I believe ah—!!" said the foppish voice, sneezing for the fifth time and a half, the one-half representing an invisible contortion of his features and an unfulfilled desire. "B' Jove! I be—I—I believe this must be a abandoned ahtaficial ice factowy. My mustache is actually bweaking off, awnd the woots ahr fwozen aws dead aws a Flowida owange gwove."

"In that case, don't worry," remarked the railroad man. "They'll bear a heavy crop next season, depend upon it."

"Chew!!!!" It was only a scholarly sneeze by the Professor.

"If you must chew, don't spit on the floor," suggested the Drummer facetiously.

The windows rattled, the door squeaked on its hinges, a body stirred on the floor, and a medley of ejaculations embraced under cover of the Stygian darkness.

"That man needs plumbing," remarked the Lawyer; "he must have burst his windpipe."

"My condition is not much more favorable," replied the personified sneeze in ambulatory action. "My breath freezes before it leaves my throat and an ice-bridge spans my larynx, and by standing on it and looking through my crystallized optics I can see—"

At this moment the wet actor emerged from the sitting-room and came in contact with this human circular saw, loosening teeth and causing havoc generally.

"Stars!" was the finished sentence of the human meteor, as he stopped his rotation, and with a lateral sway from his orbit sat down on his axis to analyze the nebulæ.

The accident was occasioned by the actor's stumbling in the doorway. In the vexation of his wounded spirit and physiognomy, the latter voiced loudly,

"I, Costard, running out, that was safely within,
Fell over the threshold, and broke my shin."

"I wish," said Hero, who while warm in bed desired light quite as urgently as her less favored associates did warmth,— "I wish you whose cranium has been turned into an astronomical observatory would mount the look-out and see if you can discover a comet in the form of a candle, or lamp full of oil, or matches, or dynamite—"

At the mention of dynamite, a loud explosion shook the risibles of the audience, indicating that the majority were inclined to make the best of their inglorious situation. Said the comedian, cheered by the laughter,

"He who is cheerful under disheartening conditions is always sure to fare better than he who mopes."

"Shakespeare?" inquired the Drummer.

"No, original. One must manage a theatrical company on the road to be able to penetrate the pearl-studded depths of philosophy." And there was a touch of pathos in the player's voice, that savored strongly of stale bread, old cheese, and stand-up lodgings.

"The fullest lives (drunkards excepted)," attested

the second half of the cast, "are those who laugh down tribulation and scorn to borrow trouble."

"Borrowing trouble, though," commented the Journalist, "has one advantage over borrowing money; it demands no security."

"Fortunately for some of us," observed Leander, "else we should be without watches most of the time."

"I endorse your philosophy," remarked the Preacher, with emphasis.

"I wish you could endorse my note," said the actor, his mind reverting to his seventeen cents balance in the bank and the letter recently received from the cashier reminding him of the bank's one-hundred-and-one-cent limit. Time lagged.

Suddenly said the Tragedian,

"Go Philostrate,"

"Stir up the Athenian youth to merriments;
Awake the pert and nimble spirit of mirth;
Turn melancholy forth to funerals,
The pale companion is not for our pomp."

"There are two voices concealed in the murk of this witchery-of-the-night habitation, which have long been conspicuous by their absence. I trust they have not frozen up." It was the voice of the railroad man, who considered himself to be foster-father to these "children of Israel." "Where is the Porter?" he added inquiringly.

"Heah I iz, boss," came the familiar response.

"What are you doing all this time to amuse yourself?"

"Ize bin expostutatin' w'at will become ob dat Shanghai roostah w'at so imprudenshus as t' distinguish de candle."

"Oh! well, that's right; cook up something that will give him adequate punishment for his fowl crime."

"Dat's w'at I finked. De bes' ting ter do iz t' cook 'im."

The dialogue was suddenly interrupted by the "lost cord," who broke forth in a whole stave of euphony.

"Huhwaw! I hauce awn ideah to wawm the woom!"

Those who were out of the room rushed in. The lady sat up in bed abrim with exultant joy, and all remained in breathless suspense for the dawn of light on this blind-man's-holiday. Nobody dared to speak for fear of frightening away the idea. The Dude paused, conscious of his new importance and enjoying the pleasant effects of the unexpected patrimony of respect from his comrades, while the awe-stricken, gaping, shivering, wheezing, snuffling, hoping satellites, fancied this new luminary to be the pivot of their solar system about to flash into resplendent grandeur, dazzling to the naked eye.

"The ideah is this, doncher know," sparkled the luminary, "awnd the moah I think of it, the moah I blame myself faw not thinking of it befoah. B' Jove! we cahn heat this woom in a vawy shawt time—"

"It must be a danged red hot idea," interrupted the impatient down-easter, whose hoarse respiratory organs emphasized with parallel grandiloquence a physical exertion commensurate with the mental strain of the idea. "Fer heaven's sake! out with it 'fore yer die an' th' sekert with yer!"

"It is simply this, doncher know. When ouah countwy was fuhst colonized, the Indians used to cook by filling earthen jahs wiv watah, awnd dwoping into them hot stones to boil the watah. Awnd doncher know, by

such an opahwation we cahn fill the woom wiv steam awnd wawm us pawfectly, doncher know. We haue a cistun full of watah, a kettle is awn the wange, awnd—awnd—”

“And where are the hot stones, you idiot!” exclaimed the Drummer.

“An idea alembicked from a vacuum,” said the Professor.

“Gwacious!” ejaculated the Dude, as crestfallen as a volcano, “I nevah thought of that; a vawy impawtant mattah, too, B’ Jove!”

“You had best consult a specialist,” advised the Doctor, “just as soon as you get home, and have several thoughts extracted from your adipose brain.”

“Yes,” rejoined the Don, “when fru’t trees ’re overloaded th’ green fru’t must be thinned out, else th’ tree ’ll bear a dwarfed crop.”

“But we might rub sticks together,” suggested Hero, who had resumed her pillow. “That is Indian, too, but plausible.”

“We,” said the divine, “have generated considerable fire by rubbing most everything else together—noses, shins, chins, etc.; we ought to be able to get fire out of sticks.”

“Sensible, too!” exclaimed the Lawyer. “One thought suggests another.”

“‘Good reasons must, of force, give place to better!’” said the dry actor.

“Vawy twue,” spoke the Dude. “I haue hahd so many ideahs stole fwom me, I awm quite dwestitute.”

“Yes, you are,” was the physician’s endorsement. “I should say your inane cranium would make an admirable mortar for a pharmacist’s pestle.”

"What do you do to earn your salt?" asked the Drummer.

"B' Jove! I don't uhn awny salt," replied the idiot. "I awm an ahtist, doncher know."

"Artist," chuckled the Journalist, "if we ever find light we'll see."

"My friends," next spoke the comedian, "you have observed, doubtlessly, that the Don has a hole *on* if not *in* his brain, like one of our number. On rare occasions like this I am often inspired by the muse, and if you will assure me that I shall not be struck in the head with a stove lid, which might destroy my train of thought, I shall endeavor to extemporize an ode to a hole. I would dedicate it to the Don."

"Capital!" exclaimed the broker. "Go on."

"A little light verse in the absence of other light will be refreshing," added the Professor.

"Now," continued Leander, "if any one should ask for my production for publication, he would notice an eccentricity in the spelling of certain word endings, for I claim that all rhymes should harmonize in spelling as well as in sound.

"If 'hole' rhymed with bowl, either 'hole' should be spelled 'howl,' or 'bowl' spelt 'bole.'"

"I think I catch your meaning," said the Lawyer; "take all the poetic license you desire. If we approve your style, we might be the means of immortalizing you. The world is looking for something new."

And without further apology, the actor lapsed into a momentary silence, and then slowly began to extemporize the following:—

TRAINS THAT MET

OWED

TO A HOLE.

BY THE COMEDIAN.

(Dedicated to the Don.)

O round, square, deep, dark, miserable houl,
 A thing without heart, not even a soul ;
 Nonentity, nothingness, vacuum, void,
 A beautiful thing for one to avoid.
 You ever appear at inopportune times
 Regardless of season or weather or climes,
 And not contented to yawn in the walk,
 You gape in my mouth whenever I talk.
 I ask some fair one to partake of ice-cream,
 When a limitless hole makes me inwardly scream ;
 So large and deep does it seem in her throate,
 A ton of ice-cream is the sole antidote.
 I even propose in jest to some gurl,
 When your ghastly vision makes my bald head curl,
 For she falls on my shoulder and sobs forth her love
 Till I ask her aghast what she thinks I'm made ove ;
 But when in fast talking I made a bad break,
 I wish then, O hole ! you would bodily teak
 Me into your confidence, swallow me whoal,
 Before I am painted the blackness of coal.
 And lastly, O hole ! you feign to be nice
 And drop me in zero and serve me with ice.
 No words have been coined which fairly express
 This horrible hole and its horrible mess.
 I simply affirm, you're a dastardly heol—
 And I'm so chilled through, I half wish you were Sheol.

Only sighs and groans applauded the comedian's unclassical effort.

" I do not generally flatter," commented the Professor, " but would the bard like my opinion of his production ? "

" I would," replied Leander.

"The rhyme is perfect." The comedian had a chill.

Time waned slowly. The actors, it will be remembered, who propounded the philosophy of cheerfulness,—and especially Leander, who felt he had contracted a bad cold,—began to grow solicitous. The latter indulged in frequent recitations rather to clear his throat and lungs than for the purpose of furnishing amusement to his companions, and his professional and more fortunate brother simply carried on the dialogue from force of habit.

" 'Life is as tedious as a twice-told tale,
Vexing the dull ear of a drowsy man,' "

said Leander.

" 'And, one day in a week to touch no food ;
And not to be seen to wink of all the day ;
(And make a dark night too of half the day) ;
O, these are barren tasks, too hard to keep ;
Not to see ladies, study, fast, not sleep,' "

added the other.

"I assure you, brothers-in-misery," observed Hero, "I am in no condition to be seen."

"Madam," remarked the Doctor, "your voice is as sweet to my ear as the song of a Polar Canary. For your sake I sincerely deplore your painful and unmerited imprisonment, but for our sakes—and I feel that I echo the sentiments of my fellows—your presence is a blessing in disguise."

"Happily in disguise," said Hero. "But what, pray, is a Polar Canary?"

"My dear madam," said the Doctor, with a professional accent to the 'dear,' "the most wonderful creature that inhabits the earth, or rather the snow, as you and I do now. By rolling ourselves in a rag carpet to

protect our frames from this rigid exposure,"—and the Doctor drew the folds of his width of carpet more tightly about him,—“we only imitate a trait of that exquisite and dainty little creature which adopts a more extraordinary and wonderful expedient in its Arctic home to protect itself from freezing, and which while I served as surgeon on an Arctic exploring expedition it was my good fortune to discover. The story—”

“Just postpone it a moment,” interposed a voice; “I have in mind an appropriate epitaph for the artist’s gravestone, in case the operation upon his adipose brain, as suggested by the Doctor, should prove to be fatal:

EPITAPH.

“His fortune lost, his aims outwitted,
Alas ! there lies one who was pitied.
‘I can succeed,’ he cried, enraged,
‘In one thing sure ;’ and so engaged
To blow his brains. He fired away ;
The bullet knocked light out of day.
But failure still, a bad one ;
He missed his brains—he had none.”



CHAPTER IX.

POLAR CANARIES.

A STORY BY THE DOCTOR.

"WE had left our boat," began the Doctor, "and had consumed two days in sledging with dogs across a great ice field, when we arrived at an island rising to the altitude of, I should think, a thousand feet. At the base of this mountain were myriads of huge snowballs, ranging on an average from one to five feet thick. We found one ball twenty-two and a half feet in diameter. Such an unusual phase of Arctic nature provoked no slight degree of curiosity.

"At once selecting a smaller sized snowball, we cut it open. To our consternation and surprise out dropped a snow-white bird. It appeared to be dead; but, suddenly, while we stood gaping in mute astonishment, the phenomenal creature displayed signs of life by turning somersaults. Then we bisected another snowball, and discovered another feathery acrobat. This was almost too much for our cold reason to comprehend. The captain asked at the time if he were dreaming.

"We were now within view of an Esquimaux settlement, and thither, tired and hungry, we hastened our dogs, elated with the prospect of bequeathing a fortune to science.

"The natives turned out to receive us, welcoming us in the usual manner; but as I drew forth the white acrobatic bird from the folds of a fur-lined pouch, a short, stern-looking Esquimau, evidently the chief of this patriarchal tribe, approached me with such mena-

cing looks and grunts that I began to reproach myself for exposing the bird. I saw at a glance that we had wounded his feelings. Walking up to me, he reached out his hand, and I reluctantly gave him the bird. Then pointing to a great cone-shaped snow-hut, he guided us to it. I can assure you that our minds underwent no pleasant speculations as to the manner in which we were likely to be received. Upon nearing the hut, I observed it to be constructed of snowballs, instead of blocks of ice as in the cases of the villages we had visited, the larger balls serving as the foundation and the smaller ones converging in a symmetrical curve at the peak, as I said, forming a cone.

"Simultaneously with this revelation to your eyes, our acute ears detected the exquisite music of song birds, an ornithological creation which I had never before heard in the Arctic regions, and which I had supposed did not exist.

"The master of the snow-hut disappeared within, and, soon reappearing with his 'queen' and chubby children, graciously bade us enter. Our suspicions were at once dispelled. But what a vision greeted our eyes! There, between the snowballs composing this shell-like habitation, which, as I recollect, I did not realize to be as uncomfortable as this room now is, I beheld little round apertures which led to hollow spheres or nests within, where reposed those beautiful songsters, chanting and caroling their exquisite notes as if it were with them a continual 'Merry Christmas.'

"Meanwhile, our Esquimau guide and interpreter was informing himself from authentic sources, and as soon as he had quaffed a good draught of ornithological mystery and a pint of seal oil he began to enlighten our party.

"It seems that these wonderful creatures with plumage as spotless as the snow and voices surpassing in range and sweetness the voice of the nightingale or canary, anticipating the six months frigid night, fly on the mountain and roll down hill until they become veritable snowballs on the plain below. And there they



"REPOSED THOSE BEAUTIFUL SONGSTERS."

remain in their smothered, trance-like existence until the dawn of day, when the sun rays melt away the snowballs and warm them into life.

"To demonstrate their remarkable intelligence, or instinct, these birds roll only on the south side of the mountain, else the sun, which never rises far above the horizon, would fail to cast its rays upon the snowballs.

"Now this phenomenal *race* of songsters is peculiar in another way. They rarely hatch less, and never more, than two young in one year, laying always two eggs. And, but for a singular lack of intelligence intended, no doubt, for some wise purpose, these birds would live to a great age and finally infest those parts

of the Arctic circle where hills abound. For the stronger the birds become, the higher up they fly upon the mountain and the larger become the snowballs; so that, as the sun's rays are not warm enough and do not shine sufficiently long to thaw the balls, the older birds, those in the larger balls, never regain life. In one instance a bird with a crippled wing was unable to fly very high and lived to be two hundred winters old; at least, so said the Esquimau who showed us the bird.

"He claimed it had been in his family handed down by his ancestors during all that time. Rolling, too, causes dizziness, and hence the birds upon regaining life turn somersaults until they finally recover their equilibrium. 'One bird,' said the Esquimau to our interpreter, 'was once extracted from a mammoth snowball thirty-five feet thick, and turned somersaults for three hours without stopping. It had rolled from the summit of the mountain to a point on the plain below a mile from its base, where the snowball was found.

"The Esquimaux of that region bestow upon these songsters a jealous affection and protection rarely surpassed by any human being for an offspring. The snow-huts are veritable conservatories of music, and, I assure you, I was loath to leave this fairy-like abode where my ears had been granted such a rare and incomparable musical treat.

"We named the mountain 'Mt. Canary' and the Esquimau settlement upon the island 'Lyre Island.'"

"How do yer spell that last name?" inquired the Don.

"L-y-r-e. Why?" interrogated the Doctor.

"Oh, nothin' pertickelar," said the Don. "It's a

very sing-ular story, an' I don't reckon I kin match it, though I'm said ter be somethin' of a liar myself."

Here the sound of footsteps emanated from the adjoining room, and the attorney entered the kitchen and groped his way to his accustomed seat without struggling with anything more material than Erebus.

"This," said he, "is my first easement to-night."

"If you can derive any easement from this abominable predicament," remarked the shivering Drummer, "you must be an archangel of sunshine in ordinary situations."

"I fear you misinterpret my remark," returned the Lawyer. "I speak in legal metaphor. What I mean by an easement is simply a right granted me by you, my companions, without profit. This is the first time my dilapidated body has drifted through these dark confines without meeting another anatomical current in a turbulent confluence. Comprehend?"

"The Lawyer is qualified to speak," said the Drummer. "I believe our currents met early in the night. His safe passage across the 'dark unknown' is worthy of note."

"I wish," observed the Journalist, "that the fellow who claimed to be a liar of some repute would put himself on record."

"He did that on the train," remarked the ecclesiast, who had not forgotten the snake story. "To engage to listen to one of his stories is very much like buying a pig in a poke."

"That's an exploded the'ry, buyin' a pig in a poke," replied the Don; "besides, I didn't say I wuz a liar. I'm sed ter be though, an' I can't understan' it. I allus speak th' truth."

"The existence of hoop-snakes is generally looked upon as an exploded theory," said the Professor.

"Wall," observed the Don, "if it is, it hain't th' same kind o' the'ry I mean."

"What *is* your definition of an exploded theory?" inquired the lady.

And without further debate the down-easter coughed, and shuffled his cold feet into an easier position, and recited a somewhat original definition of an exploded theory.

CHAPTER X.

A PERTICKELAR CASE.

A STORY BY THE DOWN-EASTER.

"WHAR I wuz visitin' some friends out in North Dekote some years ago, thar wuz a pertickelar Irishman what wuz a pertickelar nuisance ter th' rest of th' town, at least his pig wuz. Y' see he owned a big, spotted hog of a pertickelar Yorkshire breed, what a pertickelar friend of his shipped 'im from Killarney in a bag.

"It took all th' prizes, at least th' pertickelar ones, at th' state fairs ev'ry year fer three year er more, an' could boast of a pertickelar' large ancestry of several hunderd—"

"You mean progeny, not ancestry," interrupted the Professor.

"Progeny of several hunderd other pigs an' hogs scattered 'mong pertickelar ranchos in th' state.

"Ev'ry now an' then this pertickelar hog would 'scape from his pen an' root in private gardens an' cause a pertickelar rumpus 'mong th' neighbors.

"Wall, sir, if yer 'd seen that proud hog struttin' 'bout th' town in pertickelar defiance of th' civil an' military authorities, yer wouldn't wonder that 'th' pen is mightier 'n th' sword.' Several times the mayor, who wuz a very pertickelar man, got his blood up an' threatened ter butcher th' brute if it ever wuz so unlucky as ter cross his path.

"Now, O'Hallahan, th' cuss what owned th' hog an' valered it high, took pertickelar pains ter perfect it. He boarded up th' pen tighter 'n ever, but th' hog got

out one pertickelar fine day an' thought he'd do some boardin' on his own account. So 'e went right ter work in a neighborin' cabbage-patch. Then a pertickelar idee come inter his head that, it bein' Thursday, he'd take a day off; so he grunted, an' strolled off inter th' country ter enjoy a day's outin'. Now, this pig happened ter pass by a pile of dinnomite what wuz intended ter open a short route ter China, an' when he saw it he thought it'd make a purty good root, too. He calc'lated th' pile must 've been left fer 'im, it bein' his picnic, an' he jest swallowed several rich cakes of it an' grunted a grunt of thanks an' started home. He wuz used ter sech excurshuns, but he thought he'd never had sech a picnic. He allus come home from his excurshuns at a pertickelar time of day, sundown, an' by a perticke-



"END TER PERTICKELARS."

lar route, th' fashionerble street of th' town, an' he uther walked in th' road er on th' sidewalk, jest as th' noshun seized 'im. But on this pertickelar evenin' that pertickelar hog got inter his pertickelar head a pertickelar noshun ter lie down an' rest in a pertickelar posishun in front of th' pertickelar house whar th' pertickelar

mayor lived. An' th' pertickelar mayor happened ter come home at that pertickelar time, an' kicked th' hog in a pertickelar place—an' thar wuz a sudden end ter pertickelars.

"The mayor's family missed 'im, th' town police investergated fer 'im, th' soldiers from th' court hunted

th' country fer 'im, but it wuz no use; they couldn't find a pertickelar as big as a bee's tooth, nuther of th' mayor er th' hog."

"Gwacious!" exclaimed the Dude, "w'at became of them?"

"Couldn't tell yer," said the Don.

"What is your theory?" asked the Professor.

"Exploded," said the Don.

A long silence followed the story, as if by tacit agreement the whole company of highly entertained though nevertheless conscientious souls had resolved to fairly criticize the Don's definition of an "exploded theory," however unacceptable it might prove to be.

The quiet was painful to all, but especially so to the Don himself, who never in his life but once had been so forcibly impressed with the pertinacity of that seemingly unmerited obloquy to which his stories forever subjected him.

"Ibedam! (reverently)," he finally exclaimed, "if I hain't paralyzed 'em all! Speak, somebody! Are yer all dead, er friz dumb, er what?"

"Thad was a pig story," said the comedian, with a pronounced catarrhal affection.

"Course it wus a pig story!" said the Don. "Has it took yer all this time ter find it out? Did it sound like a bear, er a fish, er a donkey, er a cow, er—"

"No," said the Doctor, "but we expected to hear a true story. If I am a liar, you are another."

"Wall, why couldn't yer say so 'fore, 'stead of frightenin' me? A feller fell dead while I wuz tellin' a story once, an' I didn't know but I'd domiciled, er homiciled th' hull of yer."

It was as much as Hero could do to strangle her risibles

with a corner of her pillow. If the soberest man living had lost his last friend the previous day, he couldn't now have suppressed a chuckle, not because of the absurdity of the story, but of the manner in which it was told.

"I cannot perceive," said the Preacher, "how, apart from the sinfulness of it, your use of the word 'reverently' absolves you from the grossness, ill-breeding, vandalism, 'mauvais goût,' coarseness, boorishness, rowdyism and ribaldry you personify in your undeviating iteration of the word 'damn.'"

A silence followed. Then the somewhat supplicant down-easter, in the extenuation of his evil habit, questioned the proper ecclesiast as follows:

"Wall, Mr. Domine, it's purty hard ter drop an old, familiar friend what's stuck by yer through thick an' thin, an' soothed yer temper in many afflictshuns an' tribulashuns. Now, I jest want ter ask perlutely, don't yer ever say dam?"

"Certainly not, except I say it *reverently*, in the pulpit."

"But I say it reverently; if I wuz in th' pulpit my sayin' it would be all right, eh?"

"Hardly."

"Yer never say it out of th' pulpit, then?"

"Never."

"An' yer never lie?"

"No, sir; there would be no excuse for it."

"Ner say hell?"

"By no means."

"Never recommend th' place as a winter resort fer Chicagoians?"

"Of course not, except in my sermons to my congregation."

"Never told anybody ter go thar when mad—sure?"

"No—er—well, come to think of it, friend, I don't know but that I did once, just once, but that was quite pardonable, under the circumstances. I even then avoided using the word."

"Didn' *say* hell, but yer think th' feller understood yer, eh? Wall, suppose yer explain yerself."

The Don swelled with gratification at having extracted from the divine this confession.

"I don't mind relating the circumstance, gentlemen," he said, "for before such an intelligent audience I am sure my explanation will not be misconstrued. It occurred in this manner." The Preacher sneezed twice and shifted his legs nervously. "One frigid day in February two years ago, while on a visit to the Metropolis, I was journeying up-town on a Sixth Avenue Elevated train. At Chambers Street station a most extraordinary looking individual boarded the car. He was attired in a thin, white, flannel suit, straw hat, *negligée* shirt and canvas shoes, and took the vacant seat beside me. The mercury was four degrees above zero, the snow a foot deep, and the wind biting, and I felt my neighbor shivering violently. It awakened in me Christian sympathy and compassion, and an inordinate measure of curiosity finally prompted me to speak to him.

"'May I ask, sir, where you hail from?' I inquired, in most kind and respectful tones.

"'Hell,' said the impudent puppy, turning on me gruffly.

"'Well,' I replied, boiling with indignation, 'you better go back there, you'll freeze here.'

The chorus of chuckles in the darkness testified that the joke the good-natured divine told on himself lacked not appreciation.

"Yer pardoned," said the Don, laughing, "so fer as

I'm concerned, but considerin' yer posed 'fore th' world as an archangel of virtur, it's a wonder some spirit'al envoy extraord'nary didn't excommunercate yer from yer elervated seat. Th' poor feller must h've burnt out an' returned t' th' earth ter coal up."

"Our great cities are the devil's chief coaling-stations," observed the Preacher, "though it dawned upon me afterward, that undoubtedly the man had just landed from the Bermudas, or some other southern port."

"Speakin' of coalin' up," said the Don, "what be yer idees on cremashun? I'm friz so stiff let's talk of hot things."

"I am for and against it. The increase in the world's population will eventually demand it. But my objection to it is, that it is unsafe to keep urns full of the ashes of the departed on the parlor or bedroom mantel. One is apt to mistake it for tooth-powder."

"That's clair enough," remarked the Don, good humoredly; "I reckon yer feel ye'r' a bitter pill 'nough now without subjectin' yer friends ter th' liability of brushin' the'r teeth with yer after ye'r' dead."

During the entertaining dialogue between the down-easter and the Preacher, the Professor and the Tragedian were preoccupied with gruesome thoughts strangely in common. "I think," the former remarked presently, "the deserters of this hovel ought to have cremated the dead before leaving."

"What dead?" inquired Hero excitedly.

"Nothing, madam," said the actor, "only the Professor thought it strange that the house should be abandoned."

"Yes," said the Don, oblivious of the secret between the Professor and the actor, "th' family must 've departed lately, seein' they left th' cat."

"Dead?" inquired Hero.

"Wall, no, yer wouldn't have thought so if yer had run agin it on th' stairs as me an' the nigger did. That wuz what nearly drowned yer."

"By the way, where is Sancho?" asked the Drummer.

"Rubbin' de sticks togedder makin' m'self hot," came the response; and the scraping sound continued with increased violence.

"There's no danger of the porter suffering any ill effects of his exposure," said the Doctor. "It would be the very best thing for Leander to do, also, to throw off his cold. He could soon work himself into a perspiration."

"A habby suggestion, which I fear gomes doo lade," said the comedian hoarsely, his nostrils more congested than ever.

"Never too late," said the Doctor. "Take my advice. You stand chances of recovering by that process; it can't harm you, any way."

"Great reason," said the Tragedian, "'for past cure is past care.'"

"I'll dry it," said the wet actor, relieving the porter.

Suggested the Doctor, "It just occurred to me that, in view of a well-known scientific fact that fanning moderates the temperature, we might make the room more comfortable by employing that idea."

"Pass me a stove-lid." "A door," remarked two voices.

"What for?"

"Ter fan myself," said the Don.

And there was another cessation of talking.

It was not long, however, before the Wall Street man was heard from. Said he: "Our journalistic friend was

saying some time ago that his first reportorial venture was an extraordinary experience. If I'm not mistaken, he alluded to it as being an adventure quite outshadowing, or darkening, his present one. I wish he would entertain us with an account of it."

"I didn't say 'outshadowing,'" answered the Journalist, "nor 'darkening,' though the dark and a shadow had much to do with it."

CHAPTER XI.

EXPOSED BEFORE THE CHURCH.

A STORY BY THE JOURNALIST.

"I HAD long wished to adopt journalism as my profession, but every impediment imaginable seemed to oppose my efforts. I had, however, made up my mind that I could pursue no other vocation with the heart and soul that should distinguish a man's life endeavors, and having made the resolution I proposed to carry it out at all hazards. I planned at once a desperate siege. The citadel to resist or succumb to the attack was an editor's sanctum. I attired myself as respectably as my limited wardrobe would permit, and set out at once to introduce myself to the only managing editor of a New York daily who had not yet the pleasure of my acquaintance.

"Arriving at the aforesaid citadel, I swam the moat of the four staircases, stormed the portal, gained an entrance, drenched the defender with a shower of eloquence in behalf of my desperate plea, and then, finding I was forsaken by my whole retinue of arguments, I threw myself upon his mercy.

"I didn't seem to interest the editor—apparently he didn't know I was there—looked very busy—drew an enormous blue crayon through a page of some poor hack's manuscript, and presently said: 'Why doesn't your governor wish you to follow journalism?'

"'For two reasons,' I replied: 'I have been

chasing journalism so long without success that he considers it to be a rainbow, and besides, he says all journalists are paupers.'

"My words caused a sensation. The editor grew attentive.

" 'You go and tell your pop he's a consummate liar,' said he.

" 'Well,' I thought, 'I don't think I shall.' The front door of our house was twenty feet from the gutter, and my father was a professional accountant and good at footing. But I was a diplomat. I said, 'I'll tell him.'

" 'You appear to be a very nervy fellow,' said the editor; 'I'll give you a chance. Fetch me some news and I'll read it.'

" 'That is what other editors have done—read it,' said I; 'but will you print it?'

" 'That all depends,' said he. 'Take this article, for instance; it looks as though lightning had struck it. You may not know, young man, but I'm a stockholder of a junk-shop, and the manager criticizes me if I don't do my share of contributing. This article is mostly junk. Now I want news, something novel, sensational, if not exactly truthful, plausible, and something other journals cannot get. It's a severe trial, but I should judge you to be equal to it. Keep your eyes and ears and mouth open. You may not have a story to-day or to-morrow, but you will before the week closes. Good morning.'

"The interview was not over-encouraging to one in my condition, for I possessed just twenty-five cents which I had found in an old vest-pocket that very day. But I had use for that in another way.

"I had postponed my semi-weekly call upon my best

girl until I feared a disruption of our betrothal. The crisis, however, possessed one redeeming feature. Should my affianced get mad and break the engagement and return the solitaire ring, the sale of it might relieve my financial stress. I had written her that I was ill, out of town, up to my ears in business, and various other excuses, until I wondered why she had not detected my infamous practice. I finally decided not to lie any more—for the reason that I could not conjure up any more lies. I had borrowed a postage stamp and written her to expect me at 8.30 sharp, that particular evening; for I had recovered from my illness, returned to town, finished my business and was at last free to see her.

“ You, my friends, may wonder why I did not pawn my watch. Lo! that I had already done, also every other bit of jewelry I had possessed, everything except the filling in my teeth. They alone were rich with finest gold, and four were gold-capped. Yes, everything was ‘ hung up ’ as collateral security for those little tickets, which doubtless some of you have owned, and which I carried in a small envelope printed ‘ coupons.’

“ I departed from the junk-shop, marveling inwardly at the perils of the sea of journalism. My future looked so black that it was dark an hour before I discovered it to be night. I hastened to dinner and was late in calling upon my sweetheart. She seemed to be glad to see me and was not cross; and I finally kissed her a lover’s adieu at midnight, or thereabouts, and set out for the L station with buoyant spirits.

“ I was sauntering along at a go-as-you-please gait, with eyes and ears and mouth open as usual, when, as I entered the deep shadow of the church on the corner

of Madison Avenue and Thirty-first Street, and was about to pass the large elm tree which still stands in the middle of the Thirty-first Street walk, a still darker figure of human contour suddenly stepped in front of me and cordially invited me to make a 'g-astronomical' observation through the barrel of a pistol which he thrust into my gaping mouth. Until that moment I knew not what it was to be a true philosopher. I expected every second that the weapon would explode, and hardly dared to breathe lest I should spring a hair trigger. I reasoned that a lead diet, while very indigestible, was one frequently indulged in by persons in a like impoverished condition. I recollected, too, having on two or three occasions been angry enough to bite a nail in two; but disintegrating the barrel of a loaded revolver was about as risky as picking sour apple seeds out of an elephant's molars.

" 'T'row up yer hands dere!' commanded the highwayman, with professional austerity.

" 'Glad to throw up everything,' I replied, 'only let me alone.' I felt like it.

" It was an odd sensation talking through a loaded pistol-barrel. At once it flashed upon my brain (not the pistol) how extremely fortunate it was that I had pawned everything. While my heart thumped two beats of fright, it pounded three of ecstasy in the bare consciousness that one robber in the world, at least, was outwitted.

" 'Haul out yer watch dere!' snarled the animated shadow.

" 'S-s-s-sorry to say, sir, I don't support such a luxury,' I gasped, blinking nervously. 'I've been on my uppers lately and have had to "hock" it.'

" The highwayman struck a mean attitude, and my

legs caved in beneath me as though the bones had suddenly dissolved.

“ ‘Han’ over yer dust, den! an’ be blank suddent ’bout it! Wese ain’t actin’ a teayer.’ And the desperate character emphasized his words by shifting the firearm into his other hand.

“ ‘I regret, sir, I—I—I—I—I haven’t a red cent on my person,’ I stammered. ‘All I have is an elevated and a bridge ticket with which to get home. In consequence of hurriedly changing my clothes to make a call upon a young lady friend, I came away without my money.’

“ ‘The savage mien of the vexed and disappointed robber nearly frightened me to death.

“ ‘Yuse lie! yuse knock-kneed, spike-tailed s’iety dude! Yuse t’ink yer kin jolly me. Cough up de plunks er here goes clean tru yer nut!’ and my irascible assailant pushed the naughty-looking shooting-iron so far into my mouth that I not only smelt powder, but also tasted the grease on the cartridges. I was now beginning to take a different view of the situation, and wished with all my soul that I had just a little change with me with which to moderate, if not calm, the wrath of my ugly assailant. In fact, never before in all my life did I need money so urgently as at this time. Presently, I thought I might end the hazardous debate by inviting the highwayman to search my pockets. It proved to be a bad move.

“ ‘Close yer face!’ exclaimed the suspicious brute, sweeping my trembling stature with a menacing glance; ‘yuse needn’t try to queer me—I knows yuse got a wad —w’at use lyin’! I make de rule in my perfesh t’ b’lieve a mug dishonest till ’e proves hissself honest, an’ I’m goin’ t’ search yer clo’es till I finds de dust, see?

Come ter de corner!' And he pushed me backward a few feet to the avenue, in order, no doubt, that he might have a clear view of both streets, and so avoid detection by pedestrians or police.

"'Take yer tile off t' me! strike a pose dere!' The highwayman, after feeling in its lining, tossed the silk hat on to the pavement and resumed:

"'Off wid dat overcoat! de odder side out—dat's right—t'ell wid bein' loizy!' I plead for mercy humbly but earnestly, and the mercury of hope fell five points with his every command.

"'Take off dat spike-tail! I'm onter yer curves.'

"My sensitive shoulders crouched under cover of a frosty night, for the air was chill for November. I looked in vain for a policeman. Occasionally a pedestrian passed a distant street-lamp, wending his solitary way along the quiet avenue, and at length a tom-cat stole out of a basement and prowled stealthily along the gutter to keep a nocturnal engagement with Miss Tabby living opposite and now flirting with his rival. Beyond us five, the street was deserted.

"'T'ell wid de wipe!' my captor suddenly exclaimed, now more than ever exasperated upon finding nothing more acceptable to him than a clean handkerchief. A fiery undercurrent of curses emphasized his chagrin and disappointment.

"'Kick off dem boots! w'at yuse waitin' fer?' snapped this condensed electric storm, brandishing his pistol most recklessly. He dropped my well-worn patent leathers with an ejaculation of profound disgust, and I proceeded to don them when he seized me savagely by the collar.

"'See here, yuse blank scoundrel!' he cried, thrusting the pistol to my nose, 'yuse don't call on a loidy

widout a wad—ante up a cool hunderd an' I'm tru wid yuse.'

" 'You mistake—my—condition,' said I, stammering and shaking violently; 'I am not rich, I've forgotten what a five-dollar bill looks—' But I did not complete the sentence.

" 'Yuse lie! I'm not out fer fun! Off wid dem pants!'

" 'Please don't!' I supplicated.

" 'Close yer speaker, yuse four hunderd dude, 'fore I plug it wid lead! I hain't no hayseed. Take off dem socks—yes, bote feet. I'm tired monkeyin' wid yuse, an' if I don't fetch de dust blank suddent I'll blow yer eyes cross de Nort' River. T'ell wid paupers! Yuse'll repent yuse was ever borned 'fore I gets tru wid yuse.'

" You may rest assured, friends, that I had long since experienced such a regret.

" There I stood transfixed with terror on the chill pavement, praying to Heaven for mercy and awaiting orders from this personified Satan.

The highwayman pranced about in an aggravated form of hysteria, and his wrath again exploded.

" 'W'at yuse idle fer? Take off dat shirt!' he growled, and the way he expressed his mortification to find that even the shirt studs were cheap enamel made my hair stand on end.

" 'Off wid de odder shirt! yuse low-down, 'poverished hypocrite! Yes, off wid dem, too! w'at yuse ask me fer? I'm t'orough in my biz, I must have de boodle! Yuse muss cough up de plunks, er I cracks yer nut, sure!'

" His command to 'cough up de plunks' struck me as being peculiarly expressive, for if there *was* any money about me it was inside. I now stood on the walk, a sight not to behold, and in a most primitive and

despairing condition. To say the least, I now *fully* appreciated the blessings of opulence. My persistent and incorrigible captor dropped my garments and turned upon me with all the savagery that diabolical adjectives could express. I thought my time had surely come, and fancied the pistol going off and taking me with it.

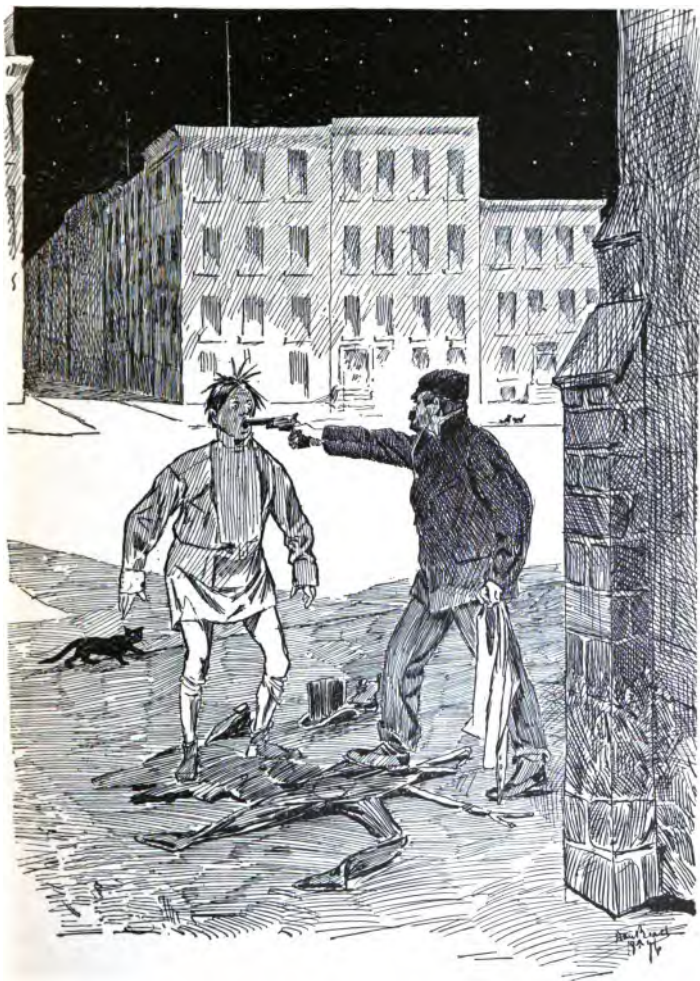
“ ‘Yuse scum of s’iety! yuse ’poverished pauper! yuse blank hy-pocrite scapegrace of de four hunderd!’ he flamed forth in a molten current of Bowery *patois* and profanity. I ventured to beseech his mercy.

“ ‘I am sorry and beg your humble—’

“ ‘Close yer speaker ’fore yer jaw is broked!’ he snarled like a tiger in my face. ‘Don’t try ter queer me like dem bunco-steerers! Yuse cheated a honest fief, yuse is fit fer de poorhouse where dere hain’t no s’iety. Why yuse not telled me yuse had no dust, an’ saved me de bodder an’ disappointment? Ter t’ink here I’ve been wastin’ a half hour on yuse blank bankrupted dude like w’at I was a hayseed farmer, when I might made a big haul odderwhere! I’ve a blank good mind t’ snake yer clo’es an’ leave yuse fer Antony Comstock ter nab!’

“ While this demon was thus waxing wroth and furious, he was performing antics which demonstrated most emphatically that only a merciful and Divine power caused that pistol to hang fire. To think of being shot into Eternity in my unrepresentable condition was repelling to my senses; yet my tragic death seemed imminent.

“ The highwayman danced about like a madman; he gesticulated like a pugilist; he brandished his revolver like an intoxicated cow-puncher; he swore like a sailor; and so diabolical and weird and horrible did he appear to my paralyzed senses that I was utterly transfixed,



"TAKE OFF DAT SHIRT."

and wondered whether I was in the throes of a terrible nightmare, or actually dead and undergoing mystic and torturing initiations into purgatory through the gracious offices of the devil's chief hazer.

"Finally his breath appeared to have given out, and he became mute. He panted, and walked round me as though he were looking for the most vulnerable spot to fire at, and then he came to a stop before my face and lighted a match.

"'Open yer jaw dere!' he commanded. And the unsatisfied robber actually grinned the ugliest and most menacing grin a fury could possibly have perpetrated, and I breathlessly witnessed him select a pair of tweezers from a number of small instruments which he extracted from his pocket.

"'Don't yuse yell, er I'll bust yer jaw. I muss have dem gold teef. Open up dere, yuse vagabond!' Such were his cold-blooded, barbarous commands. Did I submit to them? Did I! In less time than I could say Jack Robinson he had out those four gold-capped teeth by the roots. And he was an adept at dentistry, I assure you—extracted those teeth as neatly as a professional dentist could have done. Then he took out of his pocket a handsome gold watch set with a brilliant diamond star, scratched another match, looked at the time and, as though his passion for wealth had been somewhat appeased, or he was influenced by some kind Providence, said in mollified tones:

"'I t'ink yuse kin put on yer clo'es now an' make a gran' sneak. I've got a date wid a buffet cashier in de Tenderloin, else I'd snake yer clo'es. T'ell wid yuse s'iety paupers w'at make a honest fief resign his perfesh t' be a teef-doctor! Blank de four hunderd dudes!'

"Then he lowered the threatening revolver, and I

began rapidly to dress—as rapidly as a fellow could who was worse than drunk and had no chair with which to steady himself.

“ ‘ Say, chappy,’ said the highwayman, presently and with facetious familiarity, again withdrawing a hand from his pocket, ‘ here’s a quarter—’tain’t de us’al t’ing fer me t’ pose fer a ferlanterpist, but I t’inks I’s been radder hard on yuse, seein’ yuse’s a tenderfoot. I taut yuse had a wad wid yuse. Here! take dis quarter an’ stop t’ a barkeep on yer way home an’ open a bot wid yerself. It’ll brace yuse. Now hain’t I been mighty gen’rous wid yuse? Don’t jolly me—hain’t I up t’ de limit?’

“ ‘ Certainly you are,’ said I, taking the proffered silver piece and wondering what unnatural impulse had punctured the metallic rim of his conscience. ‘ I’ll jes’ see,’ he continued, ‘ if yuse appreshate my gen’rosity in not snakin’ yer clo’es er blowin’ yer brains. W’at does yuse prefer, dis quarter er yer overcoat?’

“ I winced, and my reason returned. I saw the highwayman wore no overcoat, and as mine was stylish and comparatively new, I felt that he would appropriate it as his property in any event; so I said, like a prudent man, that I preferred the quarter, and thus became a philanthropist, also.

“ ‘ Now dat is horse sense,’ observed the robber, ‘ yuse mus’ be dry in de gill after w’at yuse been tru, but lemme tell ye, ’twas yer own fault. ’Twill learn yuse never t’ sneak outen de house ag’in widout a wad, er a turnip, er a plunk er two. A mug like yuse can’t ’preshate my posish. It’s blank discouragin’ and mortifyin’ fer a man w’at has riz t’ de top o’ his perfesh t’ go tru w’at I have dis night widout snakin’ de price of a beer—not’in’ but four brass teef—when I gen’rally

makes a haul of a hun', er a t'ousan', an' a watch, an' —' (here the vexed brute raised his voice to an emphatic pitch), 'say, w'at yer perfesh, anyhow?'

" 'I'm a journalist,' I gasped.

" 'Newspoiper 'porter!' he exclaimed. 'Blank de luck t'ell! Why yuse not telled me dat when I makes yuse t'row up yer han's? I'd saved yuse all dis bodder—I knows *dey* hain't got no mun. Here's anudder quarter—hist! Dat's a cop's rap—I've got a 'gagement—t'ell no! I won't miss de quarter. S'long!'

" And at last my ordeal was over. That most extraordinary highwayman had not faded from sight ere I was 'putting' for the Sixth Avenue 'L' in the opposite direction. Twenty-five minutes later I entered the Hoffman Café to follow my friend's advice. There I was unexpectedly greeted by a college classmate, the scion of an old, aristocratic wigwam of the Manhattas, in company with two friends.

" 'You look a mite cold, old man,' said he, after the first greeting and the introductions. 'Dropped in from a dance near by? What'll you have? Rather dangerous to be without an overcoat; got a bad cough myself,' (and to the waiter) 'One pup flip, two hornets' nests and a tombstone.'

" 'Make the last hot,' I added, (and to my friend) 'Very unusual, my case, very; but you see—'

" 'But what's in your mouth?' my friend interrupted, 'you talk so queer?'

" 'It's what I *haven't* in my mouth,' I explained. 'I underwent a painful dental operation to-day—lost my four most valuable teeth.' And I exposed the still bleeding gums.

" 'Dance, eh!' ejaculated one of the comrades. 'Anybody I know?'

" 'No, not a dance at all,' I said, 'I am just returning from a late call on Thirty-first Street. Before I arrived at the "L" station I was so moved by the pitiful sight of a poor chap in need that I gave him my overcoat. Small matter—poor fellow—I can get fitted in the morning—here's my regards.'

"The three fellows looked perfectly astonished at my singular tale of charity. We had three rounds of drinks, and they said my money would not be accepted, and, of course, I didn't insist. I often wondered what they said after I left. As it was too late to write anything for a morning paper I hastened home, but next morning I was early at the 'junk-shop' at work upon that story.

"Now, friends, I want to ask, was not that experience a parallel to this one of to-night?"

"Beats anything I ever heard of!" exclaimed the railroad man.

"I should like to ask," said the Drummer, "what paper the story appeared in? Anybody who read of that incident would never have forgotten it."

"I wrote for *The New York Satellite*," said the Journalist, "but I did not say the article appeared in print. The editor declined it, reluctantly, saying it was the most extravagant adventure that he had ever heard of, and the story possessed extraordinary reportorial and artistic merits, but the printing of it would challenge the criticism of both the public and the press. The paper would be branded as a lying and sensational sheet, and its reputation for veracity and high morals hazarded beyond redemption. I was, however, at once placed upon the paid staff of reporters, and warranted in contracting an immediate job with a dentist by receiving two-weeks' salary in advance. The editor

took in the situation at a glance. He said to me that morning: 'Keep your ears and eyes open, but close your mouth.' "

"A remarkable journal," observed the Lawyer, "but I never hear of it in Philadelphia."

"Certainly not," said the newspaper man. "The *Satellite* adhered too strictly to the truth—it burst; and I, one of its atoms, flew to the Whirled."

At this juncture of the proceedings somebody attempted to put his stagnant and congested blood into circulation; and then something was heard to crack, and the footsteps ceased. It was the Tragedian who had attempted to unload a few staves of dramatic eloquence, and in his indiscernible gestures had struck the Dude in the chin, known to pugilists to be one of the most sensitive parts of the body for a fisticuff, thus swelling the meteoric display of casualties which served the only illumination to this prolonged eclipse. The Dude sat upright where he fell and exclaimed: "Jove! it is vawy unnecessawwy faw the actaw to gestwiculate. The Shakespewian owataw has bwoken my chin awnd spilt a tooth down my thwoat awnd shown me a bwilliant constellation of stahs, doncher know."

"*You* ought not to complain, then," said the Drummer, "that's more than the rest of us have seen or swallowed for six hours or more. Some people never *are* satisfied."

"B' Jove! but I'm not a ostwich, doncher know, awnd I much pwefeh lobstah a la Newbug to iwowy."

"I think," observed the Hoodoo, "that, aside from the comforts of fire and light, this situation is the most aggravating that could possibly happen to us. We are strangers to each other, at least most of us are, and I

don't know whether I am affiliating with Zulus, Hottentots, Chinese, Indians or Turks."

"Allow me to put your mind at ease," said the Lawyer, slapping his shoulders violently with his cold hands, "neither of the races you mentioned is represented here. We are all Esquimaux."

"That reminds me," said the Doctor; "my old-time thirst returns. Will the ecclesiast kindly pass round the lamp?"

"As it is a spirit lamp," replied the divine, "I must decline. It is against my principles to offer spirits to my fellow men."

"Put 'er thar," said the author of the snake story, enthusiastically, "them's *my* sentiments." And he shook hands with the darkey as blissfully ignorant of his mistake as did the divine himself, who grasped the hand of still another. The latter was only the Dude who happened conveniently near, groping his ambulatory course to a soft seat on the cook-stove, for he had a vivid imagination, as will be seen later.

"How do you feel, Hero?" inquired the Doctor.

"I am quite warm and comfortable, thank you," she replied, after clearing her throat. "I have no more chills, except, perhaps, when I hear the wind howl. I am worried, though, about our friends in the train."

"They'll keep, don't worry," said the Don. "Ice'll keep anythin'."

The lady's voice inspired a poetic sentiment in the Tragedian, and he said:

" 'Now, for not looking on a woman's face,
You have in that forsworn the use of eyes;
And study too, the causer of your vow:
For where is any author in the world,
Teaches such beauty as a woman's eye?'"

"Your pretty compliment causes me to blush," said Hero.

"A pity, madam, the dark cheats my vision," returned the actor.

And the Journalist quoted: "'Many a rose is born to blush unseen—'"

"And waste its sweetness in a blizzard," interrupted the Drummer.

"I hope you all won't be disappointed when you see me," observed Hero.

"By the way," remarked the Drummer, "speaking of roses, recalls to mind a little adventure of early traveling days. With your permission, and with the single-hearted motive of assisting my fellows in mitigating our present discomforts, I will relate the story."

"Capital!" exclaimed the railroad man. "Your hoodoo experience earned for you a good reputation."

And Leander invoked the muse:

"'But earthlier happy is the rose distill'd,
Than that, which, withering on the virgin thorn,
Grows, lives, and dies, in single blessedness.'"

CHAPTER XII.

SWEETHEARTS AND ROSES.

A STORY BY THE DRUMMER.

" I HOPE my companions of this polar-bear-pit won't think me a sentimental cuss, for I'm not, though I'm free to admit that I used to be.

" One time,—it was nine or ten years ago,—I had a mash in Buffalo, and she was just as sweet a little maid as ever walked through the rye. I was deeply interested and meant matrimony,—I always meant matrimony with the last girl I was with,—but an unfortunate thing happened, and I lost her. No, she didn't die, but she almost did. You see it was late in the P.M. when I struck the Queen City, must have been nearly six, and I had to leave for Cleveland next A.M. early. I had no business in Buffalo, simply stopped over to see Jeanette M——.

" The first thing I did was to drop my sample-case at the hotel, and register, and then drop down to the Academy of Music and buy a couple of seats for the comic opera. I had written her from Syracuse to expect me, and had heard from her at Rochester that she would go to the theatre with me that evening. Now, I always like to do things up in good style, so I stopped at the florist's and ordered for Jeanette a nice bunch of pink roses to match her pink cheeks and blue eyes. ' Where shall I send them ? ' the florist inquired. I declare, I didn't know exactly. It is difficult for me

to remember numbers, but if I have once been to a house I am not likely to miss it thereafter on the darkest night. I thought a moment, then looked in the directory. Whew! what a lot of M——'s. Prolific as rabbits! If her name had been Smith, I shouldn't have wondered.

"I didn't know her father's first name and was as puzzled as ever, but I presently singled out a number on that street which I thought would about 'hit' that locality, and hurriedly wrote 'Miss J. M——, 300 F—— Street,' on a card and handed it to the salesman.

"After dining and togging out in my finest,—I always carried my dress suit with me in those days,—I hailed a carriage, and with a beating heart started for 300 F—— Street. I was very anxious to see Jeanette again, and hoped that evening to make such an impression before leaving that I could steal a kiss without offending her. Suddenly the carriage stopped, and I looked out.

"'What's the matter?' I called.

"'Thray hundred F—— Sthrate,' said the cabby.

"'Drive on till I call stop,' said I, 'don't mind the numbers.'

"I saw that I had missed her house by about a hundred figures; but I didn't intend to 'let on' that I knew it.

"And what a cordial reception Jeanette did give me when I finally arrived! Davy! she looked pretty. But I noticed she didn't wear the pink roses, so I affected to be surprised and asked her *why* she didn't wear them.

"'Why, what roses?' said she. 'I haven't seen any roses.'

"'I sent you a nice bouquet,' said I, 'and we may

as well stop for them on our way to the theatre. I guess they're down at 300. Gave your name Miss J. M——. Didn't stop to think there might be more J's on this street.'

" 'First time I ever was called a jay,' said she.

"It was laughable to note her surprise. 'Certainly we'll stop,' she added. 'That little seven-year-old Jessie M—— is always getting things that are intended for me, and I can't understand it. She's no relation, either.'

" 'Seven or seventy,' said I, 'we'll have those flowers if I have to search the whole city.'

"We got into the carriage and drove to No. 300. There I rang the doorbell. A pleasant, middle-aged lady opened the door. Said I, 'Pardon, madam, but some flowers, I believe, were left here by mistake; they belong to Miss Jeanette M——. I have come for them.'

" 'Oh,' said she, 'you know, I thought they were intended for Miss Jemimah M——, down at 239, and just sent them to her by the butler.'

"I politely thanked her for her trouble, but I was raving mad, especially after I climbed into the cab and Jeanette said Jemimah M—— was a wrinkled, lame, old spinster of seventy-five springs and she didn't know how many falls. I had said 'seven or seventy,' and now began to think that I was a prophet, if not a saint—for I was cussing to myself at a great rate.

"When I rang up No. 239 I could hear Jeanette giggling in the carriage. I didn't smile. I only figured time allowance before the curtain-rise at the play, and talked a blue streak to the Biddy that opened the door.

" 'I have come for the *flowers*,' I said, with the accent on the 'flowers.'

“ ‘ Shure, sor,’ said she, ‘ an’ plaze accupy yurraself thar a menute, an’ Oi’ll fetch th’ box. I will thot at onct.’

“ She soon returned with a box, and I grabbed it and ran. Said I to Jeanette, when I was seated, ‘ Will you put them on now, or wait till we reach the theatre ?’

“ ‘ Put ’em on now, I guess,’ said she enthusiastically. And she opened the box and raised a couple of pairs of long, white, cotton stockings.

“ ‘ Jiminy! didn’t she drop them quick! When I thought how suddenly she must have changed her mind about putting them on, I couldn’t refrain from laughing outright, and she laughed, too. I then rapped upon the window and ordered the cabby back to the house to that blundering Biddy.

“ ‘ Faith sor, ’twasn’t me fault—,’ but I didn’t hear the rest. I took the box and rushed to the cab and directed the cabby to hustle for the theatre and not to slow up around corners.

“ ‘ Well, Jeanette,’ said I, ‘ that was a vexing mistake. It’s the first time the hose was ever played on me in that fashion.’

“ ‘ Fashions change,’ said she, and she laughed again and blushed, I know. ‘ Now,’ said Jeanette, as she stepped into the theatre lobby thronged with fashionable people, her cheeks and eyes as radiant as moonshine, ‘ I’ll put on those troublesome roses.’ And from the way she said it, she meant it.

“ Then she opened the box and raised a pair of *cor-sets*, such as centenarians wear, and fainted dead away. Imagine, friends, how I must have felt. Two lady friends of hers happened by with gentlemen escorts, which made matters worse. They took charge of her, and I ran for water, and when I returned I found her



"AND FAINTED DEAD AWAY."

gone. One of the gentlemen said Miss M—— had revived and the ladies had taken her home, and that she begged him to say to me that she wished the evening's engagement cancelled. Then to his friend he remarked: 'Mean joke to play.'

" 'That was anything but a joke, I assure you,' said I, for the benefit of both. And I hailed a cab and went for the roses. And I got them, too. But the way I threw that idiotic Biddy around the dooryard nearly got me arrested for murder. I lit out of town at midnight for Cleveland and tried to explain matters by post, but it was useless. Circumstantial evidence was against me. I sold corsets."

Not only a general hand-clapping, but a *pronounced* applause encored the Drummer's story—everybody remarked upon it. Leander, who had taken the "family physician's" advice, and who had heard that the Drummer was about to tell a story, had ceased his Indian practice in the sitting-room and seated himself at the threshold of his "wigwam." It had not occurred to him that the heated sticks would quickly return to their primitive coldness. The entertaining narrative concluded, his mind now began to dwell upon his alarming condition. "Doctor," he announced, "I have adother chill a'd my head aches a'd by chest paids be some od by righd side."

"That sounds like pleurisy," said the physician.

"Bud I'b a very healthy ban," added the actor, "a'd thig I gan fighd off ad attack till I ged out of this refrigerador. I believe pleurisy is slow."

"But you must keep active," importuned the Doctor. "A very rapid form of pleurisy in previously healthy persons comes on with high temperature, severe

chills and cerebral disturbance. Pus forms rapidly in the chest, and puncture affords only temporary relief, early death resulting from suffocation."

"I thig then you bedder operate upod be ibbediately," said Leander facetiously.

"Fetch the Doctor the crow-bar, he wants to make a puncture," said the Drummer.

"A little iron is good for the system," added the Doctor.

"Bud nod a pig iron," corrected the actor.

"I hope it is not a case of empyema necessitatis," said the Doctor, "in such a case the puncture would have to be so high that the cavity could not be properly drained. Let me feel your pulse, Leander."

The comedian extended his hand.

"Your pulse is frozen up like the mercury in a thermometer; hear that? I crushed an icy bead of blood in the pradial artery. No wonder your hand is frozen."

"Thags," said the actor, "id already feels warber. Ki'dly rebove the hailstones in my righd wrisd." The Doctor, having met with such signal success in his homeopathic treatment, asked Hero if she did not wish him to squeeze her hand, also, but he received no reply. Presumably she had fallen to sleep.

The tempestuous blizzard was heard to continue on its savage and merciless mission, and the rafters creaked and groaned in a manner to astonish even the hardy Maine-Dakota man.

"There's no use complaining," said the Drummer, "let's make the best of the situation."

"I believe the commercial man has a knack at rhyming," observed the Preacher. "I wish he would try and solace our misery by reciting some of his verses, if they are anything like his stories."

"I believe I said, fellows," returned the Drummer, "I resolved that the verse on lamps and clocks should be my last."

"I might give you some blank-verse," suggested the Lawyer, "but I cannot make rhymes off-hand. I once published considerable poetry."

"Suppose we have a little collaboration," suggested the Professor. "The comedian is an excellent rhymester. Let the Lawyer furnish the sense and Leander the rhymes."

"Very well," assented the attorney.

"Whad style do you brefer, Bister Lawyer?" asked the comedian, "spo'daic verse?"

"What do you mean by 'spondaic'?"

"Verse with two lo'g feet in it."

"Pardon interrupting," remarked the Drummer, "but try and do something you don't put both feet in."

"Dame your title," said the actor.

"In re Beaumont and Fletcher."

"Inre is a purty name," observed the Don.

"The two characters in the poem will be Richard Roe and John Doe," said the counsellor, "and represent you and myself respectively. I shall expect you to fill in the wanting rhymes to the third and fourth lines of each quatrain without delay, so as not to destroy the sense."

"Go ahead," said Leander.

"Assist be, sobe extebporal god of rhybe, for, I ab sure, I shall turn sonnetteer. Devise wit; wride pen; for I ab for whole volubes in folio."

IN RE BEAUMONT AND FLETCHER.

(A Poem.)

BY THE LAWYER AND THE COMEDIAN.

LAWYER : Roe and Doe were cronies once,
 And traveled every country ;
 Roe was clever, Doe—

COMEDIAN : a dunce,

LAWYER : And both grew famous—

COMEDIAN : won't we ?

LAWYER : They loved a maid with raven locks,
 And form more fair than Venus,
 And hazel eyes that matched—

COMEDIAN : her socks,

LAWYER : And cheeks like roses—

COMEDIAN : heidous.

“ I should say ‘ *heinous*, ’ ” interrupted the Professor,
 aside.

LAWYER : And oh, she had the sweetest lips—
 Now, Roe, you will endorse it ;
 But when I kissed her—

COMEDIAN : finger tips,

LAWYER : She slapped me on my—

COMEDIAN : corset.

LAWYER : In time I won her heart, I think ;
 She gave her hand and trusted ;
 And when we parted tears—

COMEDIAN : of ink

LAWYER : She wept for me and—

COMEDIAN : busted.

LAWYER : And when one day my fortune waned,
 She pawned for me her jewels,
 I said her heart is surely—

COMEDIAN : sprained,

LAWYER : And mine's the lot of—

COMEDIAN : bules.

LAWYER : You wooed her, too, alas, for me !

You stole the best of lasses ;

My life is now an empty—

COMEDIAN : flea,

LAWYER : Although there be—

COMEDIAN : bo-lasses.

LAWYER : " Cheer up," you say, " let not love freeze,

Bewail not your condition ; "

Ah me ! How many lives in—

COMEDIAN : cheese !—

LAWYER : Our poem needs—

COMEDIAN : revision.

" The most excruciating ordeal I ever went through," said the Professor. " If the Comedian attempt any more poetry other than Shakespeare, he will do it at the risk of his life."

" I echo those sentiments," added the Doctor.

The Don remarked that the poem said nothing about " Inre," and resumed his complaints about the blizzard.

" My chilblained partners," said he, " I've lived in the West an' Northwest since I wuz able ter vote, but I declar' of all the blizzards I ever see I never voted fer a candidate like this blusterin' despot."

" I suppose, however, none of them could hold a candle to your Christmas-tree experience in Maine," remarked the Tragedian.

" P'r'aps not, but I'll allow *this* storm does—knocks th' hull lot of 'em."

" If it would hold a candle," suggested the Journalist, " what a favor it would confer upon us. Oh, for a little light ! "

" Whew ! " exclaimed the Don as the wind whistled

loudly, "I'll bet ev'ry wire is down from New York ter St. Paul. Why, they raise blizzards out in Dakote, but they're seeds ter this punkin."

"Often have I narrowly escaped being snowed under," observed the railroad man. "It is a common occurrence in Wall Street."

"I too," added the attorney, "in fact quite recently. It was solely with the intention of avoiding the rigor of our American winter that I went abroad for the season, but I leapt, so to speak, from the antithesis of the frying-pan into the antipode of fire. And right after narrowly averting a frigid imprisonment in a crystal tomb of avalanches, I returned to America just in time to be confined in this bl—!!!! blamed ice-cream freezer."

"Wall," said the Don, "it hain't ter be sneezed at."

"!!!!!!" again accentuated the sneezer. "Of course not, although I blame myself in this instance. A timely warning came to me in my European experience, but in such a weird and unnatural way that I didn't accord it the proper respect it deserved. I am now convinced that the warning was solely for my sisters' benefit."

"Pardon my seeming levity," said the Drummer, "but—I—I wish sincerely I had met your sisters in Binghamton."

"Could they hear that remark they would turn a cold ear upon you," returned the Lawyer.

"No doubt a pair of them," the divine added.

"Papers prophesy the storm?" queried the Doctor.

"You dreamt it?" asked another.

"Neither, friends, and I wish you to take me seriously when I say that I was warned by a most strange and supernatural messenger. With your leave, I will undertake to tell you about it."

CHAPTER XIII.

THE MESSENGER OF THE NIGHT.

A STORY BY THE LAWYER.

"IT was Sunday evening at Wiesbaden, that most delightful of German winter resorts. My sisters and I had prolonged our week's sojourn into a month, and finally resolved to leave on the morrow for the Riviera to spend a few weeks before embarking for the States.

"We had just returned from our farewell Sunday concert at the Kurhaus. It was a January night, and unusually cold in spite of the boiling springs which give celebrity to the place. But as there were several dames sprinkled among the maidens present I had to content myself with hugging the fireplace.

"Beside the blazing, open grate rose a high, white, porcelain stove, which consumed little fuel and threw out considerable heat. In a cushioned chair beside the stove purred a great Persian cat, presumably dreaming a fairy tale entitled, 'Three Blind Mice.'

"Our number was soon augmented by two fair English damsels with their male escorts. They, too, had attended the evening concert. Both these gentlemen, my friends Maker and Dicky, were students at the famous laboratory of Dr. Frezenius. They were jolly souls, always good company, large hearted and liberal.

"The departure of my sisters and self appeared to be the chief topic of the conversation. We three hated to leave and did not like to talk about it.

“‘Let us spend our farewell evening telling stories,’ I suggested.

“‘Let’s,’ said a vivacious lady.

“‘Ghost stories,’ added another.

“So we began a series of as gruesome tales of the spook character as I ever want to listen to. Maker and Dicky were capital story-tellers, and their fund of the ghost type was apparently inexhaustible. Whether their stories were original or borrowed I cannot say; I never before heard them. My own recitations were mild compared with them.

“From time to time, as each story was concluded, the excited and nerveless females retired singly or in pairs from the assemblage of haunted minds; the lamp which had early been put out to lend additional effect to the grotesque entertainment had suddenly been relighted, and our jolly party of a dozen persons was reduced, at length, to three, Maker, Dicky and myself.

“‘I think the girls have heard enough ghost stories to last them through the season,’ said Maker. Dicky laughed. I smiled. ‘I’m almost afraid to sleep alone,’ said I. ‘You have a long distance to walk, Dicky; spend the night with me.’

“But Dicky insisted that he would have to decline my invitation, so I bade the boys good-night with the promise of seeing them at the station on the morrow.

“I admit now that I opened my chamber door with a feeling of dread such as I had never before experienced. My room adjoined the salon on the main floor, where, of late, so much life had been manifest; and now as I groped in the dark for my candle-stick and matches I fancied sensations of bunking against those same prowling ghosts which we had been ridiculing. After lighting the candle, I looked into my wardrobe and under the bed, locked my

windows, opened the transom, paused a moment to listen, extinguished the candle and jumped into bed. There I lay, for some time wakeful, picturing high board fences, blue skies, broadsides of barns, holes in the ground and other well-known and highly endorsed prescriptions for insomnia.

"I did not remember when I fell asleep, but I'll never forget the time when I awakened. I shudder even now when I think of it.

"A weird, lugubrious, supernatural rumble in my room startled me from sleep, and I nervously rose from my pillow and gazed at the dark and listened. I could see nothing. I heard nothing. I concluded that I must have been dreaming and fell back upon my pillow. As my eyes closed, that same rumbling sound was repeated, this time seeming to be much closer at hand. A shudder shot through my body. I again raised my head. No apparition, no sound. 'Strange,' I thought. 'It cannot be there's something alive in my ear.' I let my head again fall on the pillow, and instantly the gruesome and uncanny noise again grated upon my sensitive ear, this time more frightfully than before. The air seemed to be disturbed by phantasmagorical vibrations. A dread shiver telègraphed in circuit from head to feet and back again.

"I propped my cranium on my hand and trained my bewildered optics suspiciously about the room. A new fear paralyzed me; for, suddenly, a creaking, grating noise indicated an awful strain of physical force upon the walls, as of somebody trying to pry into my chamber. This was more than I could complacently abide.

"I was convinced that an unlawful entry into my room was being attempted, and at once leaped from bed, lighted my candle and beheld nothing visible that I had not seen many times before. What then could it be? It wasn't

a nightmare, for I was sitting in bed awake at the last sound. It must be my imagination.

"I chuckled aloud as I thought of the ghost stories which I had helped unfold for the benefit of the frail sex, and of the boomerang effect they had upon myself. I left the candle burning and climbed into bed. But I had not more than closed my eyelids when I was shocked by a hollow, ghostly sound resembling that of a person blowing his breath. I instantly opened my eyes. The candle was out. This ominous proceeding was not to my liking. It made me uneasy. A cold, clammy moisture exuded from my skin; my feet grew icy; I felt my hair bristle; my heart thumped like a piston-rod. Yet with all this timorousness a strange, superhuman power seemed to draw my nerves taut and reënforce my frame with vigor and courage—a sort of desperate valor which I could neither comprehend nor control. Without further debating with reason I got out of bed, and for the second time lighted the candle. Then, while keeping my eyes riveted on the light, I stole backward into bed, where my eyes searched the room for spiritual phenomena as thoroughly as would a cruiser's search-light sweep a haunted derelict. I dared not close them. Should I do so, I felt intuitively that my ghostly visitor would again torture my ears with the sound of its unearthly bellows. Keeping one's gaze on a dim candle flame when in a drowsy mood is as unreliable as thinking of a hole in the ground: you suddenly and unwittingly fall into the hole. Before I knew it, my eyelids were shut. However, they immediately flew open, as another breath from my hobgoblin invader extinguished the second light.

"This enraged me. I got up and lighted my last match. Then I sat on the edge of the bed, where, dangling my chilled pedals, I resolved next time to detect the spectral

monster in the very act of his black art. I must have sat there shivering fully five minutes, when suddenly a creaking noise prompted me to investigate the door. Thinking it was a draught from the transom that had blown out the light, I started across the floor to close it.

"But, just as I turned my back upon the candle, I almost collapsed from the sensation of breath cold and damp upon the back of my neck, and the sound of blowing like that which I heard before.

"I turned about sharply, and with my clenched fist knocked a hole in space and a ball off a bedpost. Then, discomfited and still more exasperated, I sat on the bed, nursed my bruised hand, and challenged my bold and unbidden guest in emphatic language that wasn't German nor classical. Calming myself, finally, I said, 'See here, Mr. Ghost, you really have annoyed me sufficiently for one night. What business have you here? Don't you know it is bad form for a man or a ghost to enter a fellow's bedchamber uninvited this hour of the night, the very night he so urgently needs all the sleep and rest he can muster for to-morrow's journey?'

"'Pardon my seeming rudeness,' came a supernatural voice out of the darkness. I was simply paralyzed with horror and consternation at this unexpected reply. I *never* had heard of a *speaking* ghost. 'But,' continued the obscure spook, 'the devil has abolished the Lord Chesterfield code of etiquette, and I have forgotten my mundane habits; again pardon me. I came here at this hour expressly to warn you against departing to-morrow for Italy. I implore you, for your sisters' sake, to postpone your trip five days.

"'A heavier snow-storm than is remembered by living native is now raging in Switzerland. The St. Gothard will be blocked for days to come, and your delicate sisters

and your asinine self would be imprisoned in avalanches in the heart of the Alps. I say, once more, wait. Five days hence all shall be safe, the road clear. Again, sir, pardon my intrusion, and good-night. I have another call to make.'

"Where on earth, in heaven, or under the earth was I? My shaking frame felt frozen. I even fancied snowflakes covering me up. I must have 'had 'em bad.'

"'But, hold, Sir Ghost!' I called to his Highness, recovering my voice before he could arise to his lofty eyrie, and gasping for breath as desperately as though he had left a vacuum in the room.

"'Well, what is it?' came the diabolical answer. His unexpected return nearly caused me to sink to the floor.

"'I feel,' I began in forced accents, 'it is my duty as a gentleman to ask your humble pardon for the warm, even fiery, reception I gave you. I maligned you shamefully.'

"'Don't let that trouble you,' interrupted the ghost, feelingly. 'His diabolical Excellency, Herr Satan, gave me such a warm reception that I am used to that sort. In fact, the earth is so cold I'm anxious to get back home again.'

"'But, wait,' I said; 'I wish, also, to apologize for my unpresentable appearance. I tore this night-robe last week during the orgies of a nightmare, from which I awoke to find my legs in my sleeves and my arms in the pillow-cases.'

"'Don't mention it,' replied the gracious spook (any one would have known from the tone of his voice he was a hale fellow well met); I often went on a *tear* myself, before I left the mundane sphere.'

"I continued, 'I am so grateful to you for your timely advice, and m-m-m-,—here I stammered nervously, real-

izing how lowly and humble I was compared with this universe trotter,—‘my esteemed Mr. Ghost, you would be doing me a great and overwhelming honor by permitting me to shake your Majesty by the paw.’

“Of course, I did not expect he would be guilty of any such indiscretion. On the other hand, I thought it would put him to flight. To hear a ghost was one thing, to feel one was another. But, friends, so help me Julius! as I put out my hand, a cold, clammy, lifeless skeleton of fingers clasped mine tightly, and I fell in a swoon.

“How long I lay unconscious on the chill floor, I cannot say, but I awoke with a dull, dizzy sensation in my head; my side pained me where I had struck a chair in my fall; my whole nervous system was shattered and exhausted. Finally, with much difficulty, I reached my bed and climbed in. Then a sickening, repulsive recollection of my late lugubrious reception of the ghostly Messenger of the Night came vividly to mind, and with a spasmodic shudder I pulled the bedclothes over my head, and listened to my heart’s pulsations until sleep came mercifully to my relief.

“It was with inexpressible satisfaction that I opened my eyes upon the light of day. I quickly dressed, as I was late for breakfast. When about to leave my chamber, my eye caught sight of the four waste matches. I used one match to light myself to bed, I reasoned, the other three I must have ignited in my sleep in a somnambulistic dream. Never for an instant did I give credence to the plausibility of an actual meeting between me and a talking, feeling, yet invisible ghost. I soliloquized incredulously, ‘Oh, what a nightmare!’ But I reflected it would make a good story to tell, and disarranging my hair in order to give me a startling appearance I hurried to the breakfast table. I greeted the three dozen guests who

were pleasantly discussing coffee and rolls and the stories told the evening before, and fell to eating.

" 'What on earth's the matter with you?' inquired Maker, laughing at my unusual appearance, his eyes staring.

" 'If you had been through what I have since we parted,' said I, 'you wouldn't smile.'

" I looked grave and fell heavily into my chair. My sisters were speechless, though I detected a mischievous smile playing on their lips which, interpreted, meant 'I know you.' Then I told my story as graphically as though I implicitly believed in it. Some laughed, others frowned. The directress scowled through a countenance ashen gray, as much as to say, 'How dare you frighten away my guests?' I asked Maker how many matches he handed me last evening. He said four. 'On my honor,' I said, 'one lighted me to bed, and when I awoke this morning I found the remaining three had been used.'

" A half dozen left the table and rushed to my room and returned with an affirmation of my declaration.

" 'I declare,' said Maker, 'he's right.'

" 'Do you propose to start for Italy to-day?' queried a middle-aged man.

" 'Most certainly,' I said; 'why not? Only a nightmare.'

" The puzzled and bewildered guests looked as if they believed in the ghost.

" At eleven o'clock my sisters and I bade adieu to Wiesbaden. We reached Basle at six, where we first learned of a terrible snow-storm ahead. And it was after ten o'clock when our train rolled into the Lucerne station. Here I noted that a great many passengers bound through to the Riviera were leaving the rail. I inquired of an Englishman the reason. He said the St. Gothard was reported blocked and the chances were that those who attempted to make the Pass would be back in Lucerne be-

fore morning. *He* was going to the hotel. That settled it; sisters and I went, too. The hotel was full, and, ere we departed, all the leading hostelries were doing a mid-summer business. Although I knew Maker would see in the papers full accounts of the storm next morning I wrote him about our delay, for I knew our friends would worry about us. Residents of Lucerne claimed it to be the heaviest and most destructive storm in the memory of the oldest Swiss inhabitant. The avalanches, continually falling, defied the united efforts of thousands of Italians at work in the Pass.

"On the eve of our departure for Milan my younger sister turned to me and said, 'Brother, do you know, I just thought of your ghost story. What *will* our Wiesbaden friends say when they hear of this storm?' I became thoughtful. We were delayed in Lucerne just five days. An hour before leaving I received a postal card from Maker. It read: 'FRIEND —: Your ghost story and the St. Gothard blockade tally. House in a panic. Everybody packing. Pension will be deserted by dark. Directress prostrated. The police have condemned the house as haunted. The cat died in a fit when your letter arrived. Will bunk with Dicky to-night. Neither of us showed up to-day at laboratory for fear of being blown up by the blank ghost. Hope he has followed you and that you will drown him at sea. Hastily, MAKER.'

"Now, my friends, so ends my story. What became of the kind-hearted fellow God alone knows. He has never bothered me since, though I wish he *had* visited me before I left the hotel last night. A sailor on my homeward voyage was said to have leaped overboard at sea at midnight and to have shrieked, 'It's after me!' Nobody ascertained what he meant, for he was drowned. The captain coolly said when asked about it, 'Oh, sailors

run amuck.' Whether the ghost ever reached our American shores!—"

The final word of the story-teller was voiced with such full yet equivocal emphasis that, while some interpreted it to be a caprice to startle the company, others whose senses had been strained to the highest pitch of excitability were now aroused to a state of breathless alarm, which was the more intensified by the premonitory and awe-inspiring words of the terrified Leander seated at the threshold of the sitting-room door.

On the kitchen stove, opposite the doorway, calmly sat the Tragedian, not in the least appalled at the gruesome and ghastly vision which ostensibly confronted the assemblage. Indeed, it was no other than he who had improvised the ghostly words, and when every imagination was wrought up to a condition to keenly detect the least evidence of phenomena the voice naturally prompted all minds to picture an accompanying apparition. It seems, in the course of the Lawyer's narrative, the Tragedian had been reminded by certain incidents related in the tale that he had, as before explained, when about to leave the hotel in Binghamton and contrary to his custom, put some matches into his cigar-case; and, being an accomplished ventriloquist and possessed with an inordinate passion for producing sensations and fine scenic effects both on and off the stage, he resolved to avail himself of the excellent opportunity offered him to give his companions a fright.

A little nervous excitement, he reasoned, would have, under the circumstances, a most salutary effect upon all. Leander, however, having forgotten for the moment about his brother player's extraordinary art, at once attributed the mysterious voice to the presence of a real ghost, and declaimed in tones unmistakably from the heart, lugubrious, distinct and well chosen:

“ ‘Ha ! who cobes here ?
I thig it is the weakness of bine eyes,
Thad shapes this bonster apparition.
It cobes upon be ! ’ ”

Thereupon he instantly recoiled, turning two back somersaults into a sitting posture against the stove, which alone prevented him from turning more, and continued :

“ ‘Art thou anythig ?
Art thou sobe god, sobe angel, or sobe devil,
Thad bak’s’t by blood gold, a’d by hair to stare ?
Speak to be, whad thou art.’ ”

The evil genius that had so mysteriously and unexpectedly disturbed the tranquillity of this unoffending company by its voice and apparent spectre seemed to advance into their very midst.

And now more than ever amazed and horror-stricken at being entertained by such an uncanny and unwelcome host, the huddling group of frost-bitten mortals tumbled into a heap together and held their breath and strained their ears and eyes to a high tension.

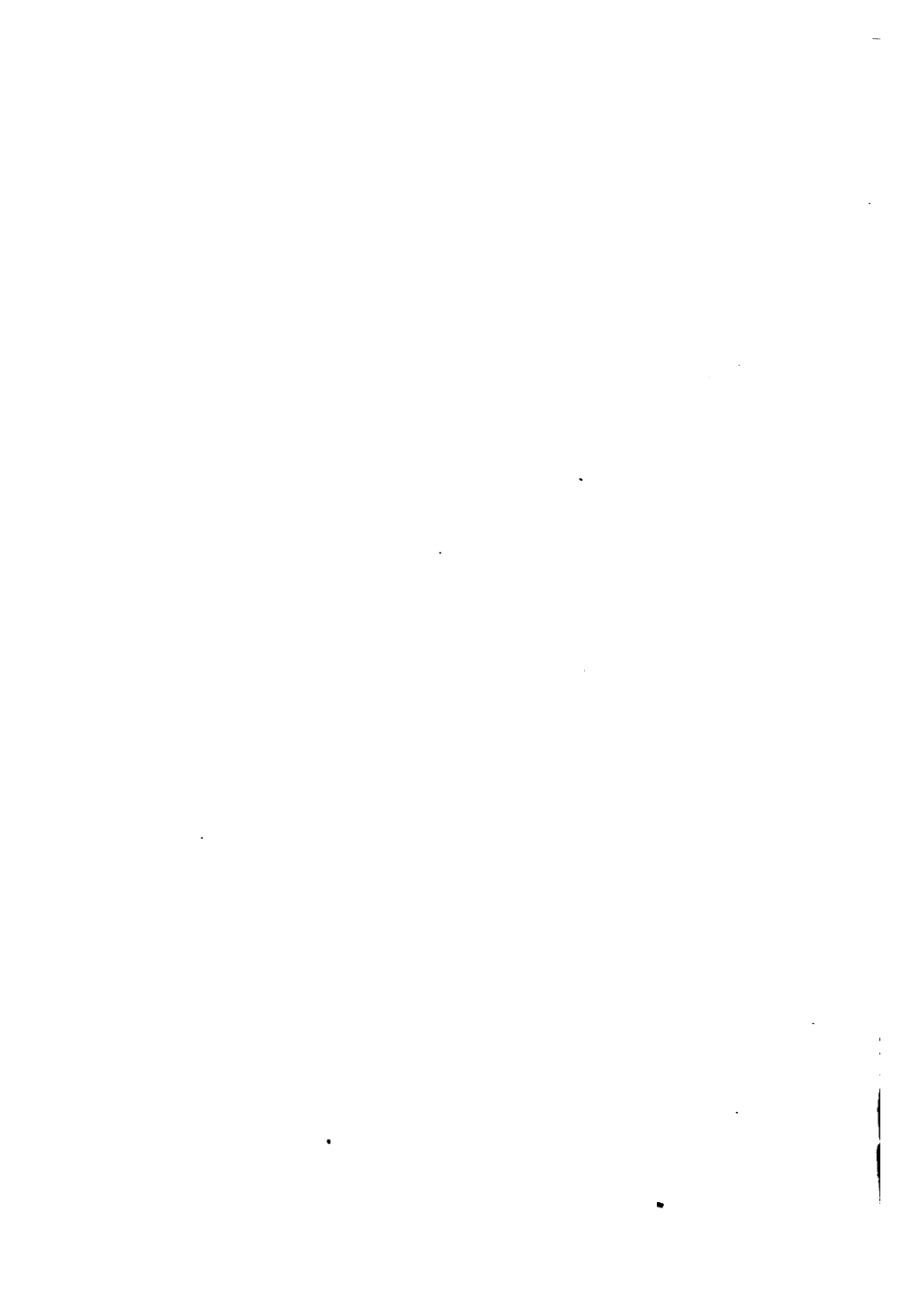
The suspense, in reality short but seemingly interminable, was finally relieved by the yet alarmed comedian who was convinced that either he saw a real ghost, or his overtaxed brain subjected him to an optical illusion, to both of which experiences he was a stranger. But remembering that he had company he said presently, in tones befitting the occasion :

“ ‘I cannot tell, whad you a’d other ben
Thig of this life ; but, for by si’gle self,
I had as lief not be, as live to be
Id awe of such a thig as I byself.’ ”

“ ‘Why, Cassius speaks ! ’ ” responded the Tragedian, inwardly heaving with turbulent amusement at the suc-



"I COME, THE MESSENGER OF THE NIGHT."



cess of his joke. And the gruesome words "I come, the Messenger of the Night; fear not!" immediately sounded in the doorway, and a frightened mortal was heard to fall through a cane-bottomed chair on to the floor from the shock rendered by the sound of the mysterious voice. One might have heard a pin drop or even a fly wink, but for the sound of beating hearts and the fact that flies were out of season. The ominous words "fear not" only the more augmented the prevailing terror of the party, and the ventriloquist, apprised of this fact from the loud-sounding respirations of his fellows, threw an inarticulate jumble of words into a circle about the room and through the doorway into the next, until the voice gradually became lost entirely to the ear.

I for one, I am free to acknowledge, was not less gullible and frightened than Leander. My naturally vivid imagination, intensified by the Lawyer's story and the ventriloquist's art, unknown to me at the time, added to the unmistakable fright of my fellows, had caused me to see a terrible apparition with distorted and sunken nose, and wildly hollow eyes which yet appeared to look, and closed jaws, and broken and irregular teeth, and hanging arms terminating in radiating fingers, and, in fact, a ghastly and diabolical figure draped in a filmy and mysteriously luminous shroud, all of which presented a vision withering for man to behold. I had seen it plainly form a loop in its silent tread about the room and vanish across the threshold.

The corona emitted by its sulphurous and fiendish spectrum had dimly revealed to fancy's eye the grotesque assemblage, peeping from their carpet-rolls like pricked snails endeavoring to squirm into their shells. I had seemed to see my comrades with staring eyes riveted upon the spook as if they, starved of vision by the pro-

longed darkness, would gorge themselves with even that repelling ocular feast. Nor, during the whole interim from the advent to the exodus of this ostensible intruder, was I able to voice a sound. My lips remained sealed as if an omnipotent finger had touched them. Our spiritual host having retired from our midst, at length, the Dude gasped:

"Fwiends—"

"And fellow citizens," interrupted the Drummer with unseemly levity.

"Did any one see anything stwange?" resumed the idiot.

"H—!!" "Should say I did!" chimed two voices.

"W'at did hit look like?" gasped the still trembling Dude, who believed that he, too, had seen something very unearthly, and now prayerfully hoped it would prove to be only a phantasm.

"The hero of the Lawyer's ghost story," replied the Drummer.

"Fer Heaven's sake!" exclaimed the Don. "I hope th' blamed spook 'll not desert th' attorney an' take a likin' fer me."

"But what are you all complaining about?" queried the jocose actor. "It's the first thing some of us have seen to-night. Call it back." And so saying he whistled, and the spook came back.

"Then I return," sounded the ghostly voice at the threshold.

A significant scurry of feet in a corner and a rustle of bedclothes in an opposite quarter indicated that the whole party were unprepared for the second act of this lugubrious pantomime.

"My mundane friends," intoned the mysterious voice, "tremble not from fear of me. 'Tis the blizzard that

demands your shivering homage. I come to you as a benefactor. The shores of earth are strewn with wrecks, and thousands of unheard and heartrending prayers for rescue are freezing into crystal drops, while unnumbered dying souls are clinging to icy masts and sinking into eternity beneath the freezing billows. But late I was a man, old and infirm, prostrate with the palsy. My wife departed yesterday to a neighboring village to return at night, but the blizzard, the blizzard—the demon!—prevented her return, and during the freezing and tempestuous night broke the window in my chamber and wrested my soul out of my frozen, clay-cold body. Hundreds of mortals have, like myself, been stolen from earth while in their homes and in the highways. Out of Christian pity and charity I come to relieve your dire necessities. In my spiritual omnipresence, I see some matches in the cigar-case of the Tragedian who fortunately and wisely bade me return. They will enable you to find light and heat and food and raiment. Farewell."

With his last word the ghost disappeared, and the fear-shrunken human mollusks crawled out of their "shells" and audibly marvelled at the prophetic words they had heard.

"Most extr'ordinary!" gasped the Professor.

"The awfulest-looking Mephistopheles I ever saw," observed Leander. "If I could make up like that devil my fortune would be made."

"Friends," said the ventriloquist, as he opened his cigar-case, "I'll be hanged if the ghost wasn't right. I have found the matches. Having lost my pocket match-safe some days ago, I put the matches in my cigar-case, which accounts for my seeming criminal negligence."

But the actor had not finished his apology before a murmur of voices expressed a universal gladness at the wonderful yet incomprehensible sequel to the Lawyer's ghost story.

CHAPTER XIV.

A LIGHT SUPPER.

"DON'T be extravagant with your matches, now," advised the cautious Professor, as his ear caught the sound of the scratching of the match on the actor's trousers.

"I have a dozen or more," replied the Tragedian, "but—but I hope I didn't steal a box of those patent, non-combustible, non-conflagration, nonsensical matches which depend upon a patent box to ignite."

Then with the actor's second effort the match flashed into a sputtering blaze, giving promise of a happy deliverance of the party out of their dark dilemma; and with the last faint glimmer of the lurid flame sounded the breaking of sticks. A chair was about to experience a martyr's end. Said Leander, "Excuse by gold in by dose, bud

" 'Those thad with hasde will bake a bighty fire,
Pegid it with whead straws.' "

"Kirrect," said the Don; "we want paper er shavin's," and the click of the speaker's opening jack-knife had an accent extremely menacing to the broken furniture.

Paper was a scarce commodity. Leander donated a pocketful of love-letters which he was more than anxious to have destroyed, but when on second thought he announced that they were in his soaked coat, regrets were warmly expressed in spite of the cold.

"Where is that incorrigible porter?" inquired Hero. And the Tragedian added:



"THE MEN UNROLLED THEMSELVES FROM THEIR RAG-CARPET CYLINDERS."

“ ‘ We cannot miss him : he does make our fire,
Fetch in our wood ; and serves in offices
That profit us. What, ho ! slave ! Caliban !
Thou earth, thou ! speak.’ ”

And Leander shouted :

“ ‘ There’s wood edough withid.
Cobe forth, I say ; there’s other busidess for thee ;
Cobe forth, thou tortoise ! ’ ”

Sancho, needless to say, obeyed the summons promptly. The Don remembering that he had left the candle-stick in the next room recovered it, and as he lighted the remnant of tallow exclaimed, “ God bless th’ cow ! ” Then he waved the light about the room, and with a sweeping gaze took in the ridiculous sight, and broke forth into a hearty laugh. It was certainly a scene without a parallel of its kind. As the men unrolled themselves from their rag-carpet cylinders their bodies resumed their former activity, and two of them, with even increased ardor. Hero drew the spread under her chin and looked shy through the meshes of her disheveled hair, not less convulsed than her companions at the unique pantomime presented ; and then a spontaneous peal of laughter resounded through the house such as to strain its acoustic powers from cellar to garret. How quickly light will disarm fear and vanquish superstition ! Some began to disclaim their belief in and consequent fright at the ghost, and credited it to an hallucination, while others denied having seen any apparition, though they admitted having heard a mysterious voice. Leander alone, who now recalled his brother actor’s art, could account for it. He, however, was mum, not wishing to spoil the delusion.

“ No hallucination about that,” said the Lawyer, well schooled in ghost lore.

"And I am not deceived by my senses," attested the Doctor, "for I was pricking my limb all the time."

While the Don, armed with his huge jack-knife, played barber with the chair, the dethroned stove was readjusted on its legs and the teakettle filled; and soon after a roaring and crackling of burning wood was mocking triumphantly at the maddening tempest in a manner comforting to every heart. As though even the stovepipe was astonished it creaked and trembled, and the Don remarked that if there were any witches or spooks or devils lurking in the chimney he'd make smoked hams of them.

Hero donned her thinking cap and advised the man who found the lamp up-stairs to recover it at once before the candle-wick became exhausted.

Of course, the stairs were down. Several members lifted them to enable the Tragedian to ascend; but at the same time Sancho, unobserved, availed himself of this opportunity to enter the cellar for the rooster.

The actor descended with the lamp, the stairs were lowered, and the darkey was again entombed in the cellar and for a time forgotten.

"Gentlemen," said the lady, "I wish to get up and assist you. Our unlucky Leander, who is suffering from the effects of his cold-water plunge, may occupy the bed instead. I feel quite recuperated. If you all will please retire to the next room I shall proceed to dress. But first you must lend me clothes."

"I bequeath you mine," said Leander; "we si'bly exchange positions. As I disrobe I will ha'd theb to you."

"Very well," Hero replied; "but you may toss me the garments—I'll pardon the seeming rudeness."

While this unique charade was being performed in the dark, an animated scene was presented in the pantry behind closed door. Some were searching shelves, others

were prying a door off its hinges to be laid across the yawning crater of the cistern, while the Dude alone remained inactive in the sitting-room undoubtedly trying to conjure up a new idea. At length the lady called out, "Come in!" and the party on reëntering the kitchen beheld a curious metamorphosis of the comely widow, and observed the smiling actor tucked snugly in the warmed folds of the bed, with his heart swelling as much with gratitude as his throat with soreness.

The Doctor, at last enabled to distinguish physic from poison, fed the congested player copious prescriptions of quinine from his medicine case, and then proceeded to prove that witch-hazel was not the only thing which might be extracted from an alligator. He found in his satchel a pair of slippers which he bade Hero wear.

It hardly seemed possible that six hours had elapsed since the voluntary lodgment of the belated travellers in this deserted house. It was now eleven o'clock.

"Say, boys," remarked the Drummer, "the bunkers of my stomach are empty; let's coal up."

"An' pardon me," added the down-easter, "but I'm arid as an alkali desert," and the latter proceeded to raise the cover to the cistern. The divine stood beside him with tippet and umbrella and pail in hand.

"Yer hain't goin' down with a parachute, be yer?" he queried, as the umbrella voluntarily opened.

"Course not," said the Preacher. "Its catch is broken." He then proceeded to fasten the muffler to the umbrella and lower the pail. The sight of this dignified and sanctimonious ecclesiast humbling himself to the attitude of a Mohammedan, prostrate on his face, struck the others standing by as being so funny that the Drummer started to sing the "Old Oaken Bucket," and all voices joined in the chorus.

The Don dipped a cup of water and was about to drink, when the Lawyer remarked, "Let the fowl drink."

"Who called me fowl?" growled the Don.

"I," said the attorney, "and I reiterate, let the fowl—the rooster—drink; we might wisely feed him, too, for I fear we shall find him tough and antique."

"But doncher know," observed the Dude, awaking from his trance, "the antique is all the wage."

"Oh," said the Drummer, "no, we didn't know; we're behind the times."

"As much as six hours," calculated the Professor.

At this point the already snoozing comedian broke out in a first edition of nightmare:—"Did I hear some one say chicken?"

But nobody took any more notice of him than if he were a reclining marble in a Hall of Echoes.

"Thar mus' be some grub in th' shanty," said the Don. "I'm hungry 'nough ter devour a bat." As he spoke he stepped upon a rickety stool and reached to a shelf.

"That's right," observed the Wall Street man; "we'll search the whole ward."

"What number is this ward?" asked the Preacher.

"Zero," said the Tragedian.

"Zero is not a number," corrected the Professor, "simply a cipher."

"Very plausible," said the Lawyer; "no one seems to understand the cipher."

The Don removed the cover of a tin box and scrutinized its contents suspiciously. "What's this pulverized myst'ry?" he interrogated. "I say, Sancho! Where is that d— (reverently) nigger?"

There was no response. He straightened up to the attitude of an auctioneer and called again, "Porter!"

And at once, above the sound of the moaning wind, came the stifled accent of the darkey's voice, "Mistah Dah-h-h-n!"

The look of bewilderment which overspread the down-easter's countenance as he cocked his head to listen was comical in the extreme.

"Ibedam!" he exclaimed, "if th' nigger hain't in th' cistern!" But he had just alighted on the floor when the Dude remarked, "Sancho is down cellah, inwesticating mattahs with the candelabra, doncher know."

The darkey was soon delivered from his cold imprisonment with the flapping and squawking fowl in his hands; then upon the Professor's advice the company resumed their "researches."

Said the latter, "We may yet compile a delectable volume which will throw light upon these dark days of starvation and satisfy our cravings for culinary knowledge." And the Tragedian added:

" 'You know, that I held Epicurus strong,
And his opinion.' "

The box which the Don opened and smelled of he as quickly dropped. It was Cayenne pepper and his nose was full of it. Such a shaking up was more than the fiery condiment was accustomed to, and it rose in the air and scattered in all directions like infuriated bees disturbed from their hive, causing such congestion of the air in the room by fits of sneezing as would put an English squire to the blush. The busy people flew out of the pantry, the pepper after them, and the sleeping actor sneezed and cried out in his slumber:

" 'You'll bar the light, by taki'g it id snuff;
Therefore, I'll darkly e'd the argubent.' "

"I declare," groaned the Preacher, wiping his bloodshot eyes, "I believe that actor can go through a whole rôle in his sleep." But the words were hardly said before another terrific sneeze shook the bed and the comedian rolled out upon the floor. For a moment he did not stir or speak. "Did anybody say chicken?" he presently inquired.

"Climb into bed," said the Journalist. "You've been crying in your sleep as though your brain were a hen-roost."

Meanwhile Hero was busy at the stove.

"'Alack for pity,'" said Leander, picking himself up:

"'I not rebeg'ring how I cried oud thed,
Will cry id o'er agaid,'"

and climbed into bed.

"We need salt as well as pepper," said the Wall Street man.

"Indeed," attested the lady, "you'll find the rooster fresh enough. Fowls are usually hung a day before eating."

By this time the Don had resumed his old stand and had another box of mystery in his hand. "Sancho!" he called,—and he said to the Journalist aside, "Somebody 'll be pizenen yet; none of these blarsted boxes 're labelled.—Porter, taste this stuff," he commanded. "I don't know whuther it's soda er rat-pizen."

"An' I doan wan' ter know," replied the darkey with a wry countenance.

"Taste this an' don't grumble," stormed the Don. "If it's all right, yer get th' first fodder; if it's pizen, th' Doctor won't charge fer services."

The trembling porter, already the hero of many battles, shrunk from this command, but as if from hypnotic influ-

ence he touched his tongue to the powder, and screwed up his face until it looked like the contorted phiz of a pug-dog intensified a hundred degrees.

The Doctor, startled by the apparently alarming symptoms, took the darkey's limp hand to hunt for his pulse, and finally found it in his left ankle. The darkey's many falls had evidently jarred it out of place.

"I detect," said the physician, "a slight arrhythmia, due, however, more to the patient's excitement than to the powder."

"Has I got de rifmy, Doctor?" the scared darkey inquired.

"Yes, but don't worry; arrhythmia is only an irregularity of the pulse—no illness nor poison."

Sancho looked much eased in mind. After several hundred different facial expressions, which he rendered with kinetoscopic celerity and which kept the eye-witnesses at a fever heat of curiosity and amusement, the Don asked what the powder tasted like.

The porter strained his intellect and stammered, "Bittah as medicine, sweet as honey, sour as green grapes, an' puckery as persimmons, all confrustrated togedder like—"

"That'll do," interrupted the Professor. "His inability to express his knowledge is only exceeded by the Dude's facile powers of heralding the wisdom he has not."

The Don opened another tin receptacle and smelled boldly, believing there would not be two pepper-boxes; but he almost dropped it, also. It happened to be ginger. When he was through his new sneezing fit he was asked by the Drummer if it were snuff, pepper, mustard or ginger, but he replied, "In the words of ! ! ! ! ! the nigger, I th ! ! ! ! think the whole lot of 'em con ! ! ! ! damned together."

The various mysteries were tried on the darkey, under

the Doctor's supervision, and soon a limited supply of groceries was collected—a small box of coffee, a bag of salt, some mustard, allspice, soda, baking powder, brown sugar, molasses, vinegar, a smoked herring, and lastly, a small bag of corn meal. This last was discovered by the Tragedian, who said :

“ ‘ I don't know whether cockle or jackasses were sown,
this is corn and a good measure of that. ’ ”

When the Lawyer stuck his face in the bag he withdrew it quickly. Said he, “ Everything seems to sour upon us. ”

Hero took the meal bag and replied : “ I fear the time will be when you will sour on the meal. ” And the actor added :

“ ‘ For it can never be,
They will digest this harsh indignity. ’ ”

The widow was a blessing to the party. She now volunteered to make cornbread for supper, and asked all to assist her, and, of course, there was a full chorus of ayes.

“ To begin with, ” said she, poking a piece of door-panel into the blazing fire, “ I must have something with which to settle the coffee. ”

“ Use salt and water, ” suggested the Journalist. “ It's often used to settle the stomach. ”

“ I know, ” remarked the smiling lady, “ and the same remedy may come in very handily after you have eaten of my farinaceous experiment. I don't dare let go this bag, it's so lively. ”

“ It's caught the true spirit of our party, ” observed the Wall Street man, relieving Hero of the charge.

“ I can't guarantee my coffee, either, ” said Hero.

The financier chewed a kernel. "No more coffee than pea-coal," he remarked; "more like peanuts browned." He handed the box to the Bostonian.

"Browned beans," said the Drummer—"unmistakably."

"You ought to know," replied the Wall Street man.

"If I only had an egg," sighed Héro, "something to give life and flavor to the coffee."

"Will a bad egg answer the emergency?" asked the Tragedian, raking the ashes. "If so, I donate my friend Orlando;" then, glancing at the quiet bed, he added:

" 'Tis as impossible
That he's undrown'd, as he that sleeps here swims.' "

"If a bad egg will do," chimed the Journalist, paraphrasing the Ancient Mariner, "'Eggs, eggs, everywhere, nor any egg to eat.' "

"Go inter th' next room, Sancho," said the Don, soberly, "an' see if yer kin coax an egg out of that fowl."

The darkey blinked. "Ef dis heah roostah lays an aigg," said he, "it am agin' all hen 'ligion I eber heah tell ob." The darkey rolled his eyes earnestly, and, as the Don was not in the habit of joking, vanished at once into the darkness.

"If," said the Professor, addressing the divine, "contrary to all ornithological orthodoxy that rooster does lay an egg, what would you say then?"

"Well," replied the reverend, scratching his head, "I suppose I should call it a lay-rooster."

At this point such a wild fluttering and squawking was heard in the next room that the Don rushed to the rescue of the tortured fowl, and, indeed, it was well that he did, for the poor rooster was nearly dead by the time he arrived.

"I hauve anothah ideah," came the voice of the intel-

ligent idiot,—and this time there was no evidence of spellbound expectation and suspense in the party;—“when I used to camp in the fawest, doncher know, we settled owah coffee with cold watah.”

“The Dude speaks with the wisdom of Confucius,” said the Professor.

“Like the Shanghai rooster,” observed the Lawyer,—“both indigenous to China.”

“Quite to the contwawy,” said the Dude, misinterpreting the allusion, “my postewity came—”

“Your awncestors, man, not postewity,” interposed the Lawyer, laughing.

“My awncestaws came fwom Damme, Flandahs, two hundwed yeahs ago. I awm of Dutch descent, awnd I awm pwoud to say I awm awn Amewican.” This little speech was delivered with that air of conscious patriotism which expects applause; therefore, with the hope that it might stimulate his mental powers, the Don offered three cheers, and all hurrahd.

Said some one, “We need clean water; the cistern is unwholesome.”

“Why not boil snow?” queried the Journalist.

“Capital,” said the widow. “Come, pour the water into the pail and fill the kettle with snow. This hot water will answer for dressing the rooster.”

The divine held a pail while Hero emptied the kettle, but accidentally the hot lid slipped off on to the Preacher’s hand, causing him to drop the pail. The floor was flooded.

“‘This inundation of mistemper’d humour,’” cried the Tragedian, playing leap-frog with the stooping Preacher in order to get out of the way, while the Professor paraphrased Richard Third by declaiming, “‘A plumber, a plumber! my kingdom for a plumber!’”

Hero had escaped in an arc, by half encircling the room, and after the panic had subsided she handed the pail again to the divine and said: "Here, fill it; heat and cold are antidotes for one another; the snow will take the smart out of your burn."

Meanwhile Sancho patiently awaited orders. He stood in mute perplexity at the proceedings like an old campaigner with forage in hand, and, saluting the Don, asked, "Shall I butchah de fraxious repast, Mistah Don?"

The rebellious captive appeared to understand the porter, and squawked and flapped frantically.

"A very timely suggestion," observed Hero, "which adds several feathers to your cap."

"The snow," observed the Preacher upon his return, "appears to be as lofty as a church steeple. I can't see the trains and I heard no bell."

"Thanks to Providence," remarked the Tragedian, "we have a belle with us far sweeter and 'usefuler' to-night than locomotive or church bell," and he cast an admiring glance "her-ward," and added:

" 'Bold of your worthiness, we single you
As our best-moving fair solicitor.' "

"He'll be giving the belle a ring before the night is over," hinted the Journalist. And Hero stooped beside the stove and hid her embarrassment in the oven as she said, "I fear this cornbread will be as flat as some remarks I have heard."

Suddenly the Professor called from the hall, "I've found a cache!"

"Cash?" exclaimed a half-dozen voices, "Gold?" "Silver?" "Paper?"

"What valer has cash ter us in this prison?" queried the down-easter.



““YOU MAY HAVE THE *HOLE* OF IT!’ SAID THE PROFESSOR.”

"He must divide with us!" shouted the awakened comedian.

"You may have the *hole* of it!" said the Professor, as he entered the kitchen with a bag of potatoes and bacon. "I found these in a receptacle in the hall floor, and there is a bag of onions left in it. Some one go for them."

"Th' bacon is all hunk," said the Don, holding it high for all to gaze at.

Suddenly a bright thought came to the legal mind. He wondered if there were not some feminine apparel hidden in a secret closet, and proceeded with a lighted taper to explore. His search was soon rewarded, and with a blue polka-dot gown, a calico apron, a red flannel skirt and a sunbonnet in his arms, he hastened with the chivalric intrepidity of a knight errant to bestow his booty upon his Dulcinea. Hero received the donation with genuine gratitude, and immediately withdrew to the next room to attire herself in it. She soon after reappeared transformed into such complete feminine loveliness that the whole party entirely lost their hearts to her.

"My neckerchief looks like watered silk," said the Doctor.

"It ought to," Hero replied, smiling; "I used it for a towel."

Her dark-brown eyes sparkled brilliantly from under long, black eyelashes, the healthy glow of young womanhood bunched roses on her cheeks, and, electrified by the unabating excitement of the hour, every movement of her lithe and graceful figure was characterized with an air of such confidence that all feasted their eyes in silence:

"Damme!" ejaculated the Don, "I didn' know she wuz so purty."

Soon a loud disturbance in the hall, clearly indicating

a spirited engagement between Shanghai and Ethiopian, portended an immediate transformation of the rooster into a Bird of Paradise; and, when the deed was done and the tempestuous wings and legs grew quiet, Sancho entered, and with an air of pomp and inflated importance announced: "De roostah am no mo' a bachelah."

The Don was noticed to be weeping (Hero had handed him a quantity of onions to peel), but as he detected the Drummer casting admiring glances at the comely widow he said, "Let no feller 'tempt ter make love ter th' only woman." And the Tragedian added:

"Therefore, brave conquerors!—for so you are,
That war against your own affections,
And the huge army of the world's desires,—
Our late edict shall strongly stand in force."

And the sleeping actor took up the thread of the score:—

"Navarre shall be the wo'der of the world."

"But you more wonderful of all," added the Wall Street man.

"Now," said Hero, "what shall I do for milk?"

"Crack somebody's cocoanut," suggested the Doctor. Needless to say, no ripe cocoanuts were found.

The kitchen presented a lively scene: mush and onions frying, coffee boiling, teakettle singing, the Doctor dissecting another door for "hash" with which to feed the voracious fire, cutlery and plates rattling, and almost everybody active.

The Dude, however, was deep in the "occult" science of dressing the fowl. It seems that Hero, having decided that idleness was the father of many evils, had assigned the offensive task to that individual. As the Journalist

glanced at the idiot he gently reminded his fellows of the lines:

“ ‘Satan finds some mischief still
For idle hands to do.’ ”

The descendant of the ancient house of Damme presented a scene worthy of embodiment in some old Flemish painting. “Hewo!” he called presently, with a vague suspicion that he had burst the fowl’s gall, “w’at shall I do with the cwop?”

“Crops go with the soil,” said the attorney. “See 87 New York Reports, 324.”

“He is having an offal time of it,” remarked the Professor, grinning.

When the rooster was finally dressed, the Don hung it out of doors, with the hope that its toughness would freeze out of it in time for the morning meal. Supper time was approaching.

“ ‘Here comes the Countess; now heaven walks on earth,’ ”

called the Tragedian, as Hero emerged from the sitting-room, whither she had retired a few moments before to arrange her coiffure. Immediately on being rescued from her involuntary bath in the cistern she had taken down her hair to enable it to dry, and now, thanks to the Drummer’s dressing-case, her classic head was as tastefully arranged externally as the Dude’s was badly deranged internally. The steaming dishes and boiling coffee were speedily placed on the table, the seats arranged, and supper only awaited a tardy four who were gathered round the water-pail hastily performing their ablutions.

“It is a light supper,” said Hero, with a humorous twinkle of her eye, “but I have done my best in preparing it.”

"It will no doubt appease our appetites," observed the Professor, eyeing the flat-looking johnny-cake.

Hero's words created universal suspicions of her insincerity, so that even Leander responded to her little speech from the comfortable folds of his cot: "'I hobe your warra't will bear out the deed.'"

Then the Tragedian approached the lady with bended arm, and saying with a courtly bow,

"'Fair and noble hostess,
We are your guest to-night,'"

escorted her to the 'uneasy' rocker at the head of the table. And next addressing the ecclesiast,

"'To-night we hold a solemn supper, sir,
And I'll request your presence,'"

the actor motioned to him to take the seat opposite the widow, at the foot of the table.

The bedridden comedian looked on hungrily, envying his companions their apparel, until, losing patience, he reminded the Preacher of his duty, by saying, "'Anointed, I implore so much expense of thy sweet breath as will utter a brace of words.'"

"Better a brace of geese," said the Don.

"Friends," spoke the divine gravely, as he stood in the attitude of counting his flock, "there are thirteen in our party; no wonder we have met with ill luck. There are only twelve at the table, however, so if you will all close your eyes with me, I will ask a blessing upon this frugal meal and thank the Lord for bringing us to this state of salvation."

Strange to say, everybody obeyed the ecclesiast's request, not excepting the Don. But what a surprise

greeted their eyes upon opening! For an instant each suspected he had suddenly gone blind. The lamp, which imperceptibly had been growing gradually weaker from a too frugal diet of oil, had gone out during the blessing.

"A dark ending for a light supper," sighed the astonished Wall Street man.

" 'The jaws of darkness do devour it up;
So quick bright things come to confusion,' "

declaimed the Tragedian feelingly, and his brother-player added sympathetically:

" 'I dreabt to-night, thad I did feast with Cæsar,
A'd thi'gs unluckily charge by phadtasy.' "

"What awful music that player makes with his catarrh!" remarked the tutor, with a deep-drawn sigh.

As soon as the hungry company had recovered from the shock of their late surprise, the discussion became general.

"When we had light we should have hunted for oil; very short-sighted," complained the Lawyer.

"So short-sighted," said the Don, "I can't see my own beak."

"Perhaps you haven't your beak on," suggested the Drummer. "Your savage charge upon the door, I believe, demolished it."

"Nor has anybody a *beacon*," called Leander, whose base wit derived an advantage from his reclining position, "else the room would be lighter than—"

But he did not finish. The crash of a stove-poker through the window beside the actor's bed shattered the sentence and sent a shiver through his frame sufficient to obliterate any dormant pun which might still be lurking

in his brain. Fearing lest missiles should travel in pairs, he then wrapped his head in the pillow and remained quiet so long that some feared he had expired from the shock.

"I think," suggested Hero, "we had better postpone the meal until daylight. The repast is hardly dainty enough to warrant partaking of it in the dark, and wooden or paper torches would be short-lived and unsatisfactory."

"The lady speaks wisely," said the Preacher. "The good Lord has decreed that we shall pass the night in darkness. It must be for some wise purpose."

"By the by," the Drummer inquired, "why didn't you touch your soup at our lunch in the train?"

"My dear sir," answered the Preacher, "I must admit I am superstitious. A gypsy once said, in telling my fortune, always to look in the soup and I should be lucky. I did so, and you may not believe me, but there, spelled in letters of vermicelli as plainly as could be, I read the word 'don't.'"

"An' yer thought it wuz pizen?" queried the Don, who had eaten more of that soup than the others combined, "an' wuz goin' ter let us eat our fill of it without hinderin'?"

"No," said the Preacher, "I didn't exactly believe it poison; in fact, I didn't know what it meant. I now believe, however, it meant *don't* leave the train."

"Of course, that was it!" exclaimed the Drummer, "and had you unfolded your secret then I should have saved our party this mean predicament."

"I am very glad the ecclesiast kept his own counsel," observed the Lawyer; "I wouldn't have missed this adventure for the world."

"Fellow Esquimaux," said the Wall Street broker, "the glorious realm of Day is about six hours distant, and

there are two routes which lead to it. Both lie through dark tunnels. One is the long and dull road of the Reality; the other the short and entertaining road of the Imagination, which is cheering to every passenger who travels it. I choose the short route and should like your company, provided you pay your own fare. Each ticket costs a story, a coin of the tongue."

"I go with the Wall-Streeter," said the Drummer.

"So say we all of us," seconded the Don.

"Of course," said the broker, "as I am getting up the excursion I expect to travel on a pass."

"Not much," returned the Doctor. "It is a Dutch treat, and no passes will be issued. I propose, however, that you be honored for your kind services in our behalf by being allowed the first place in the line at the ticket office."

At this moment the Doctor fell over a heap of fire-wood which the porter had left in the sitting-room door.

"All those in favor of the motion say 'aye,'" proposed the Lawyer.

The man who made the *motion* picked himself up and yelled "No!" It was the only dissenting vote.

"I accept the honor reluctantly," responded the broker, "because I am a poor story-teller; in fact, I have no stories to tell."

"I should think one's life's adventures in Wall Street would fill a library," remarked the Professor.

"Give us a bull er bear story," suggested the Don. "What are yer, anyhow—which er tuther?"

"Bear," answered the broker.

"An' why wuzn't yer a bull?" asked the Don, for sake of argument.

"Oh," said the broker, "a bear started me on my career long before I went into the Street, and I made up

my mind at once that if ever I went on 'change I'd be a bear."

"What do you mean by 'a bear,' when you say one started you on your career?" inquired the Preacher.

"Why, a bear, a real bear; not in Wall Street, but in the woods."

"I should like to hear the story," said the Drummer.
"A true story is a rarity."

CHAPTER XV.

URSULA :

A STORY FOUNDED ON BEAR FACTS.

BY THE WALL STREET MAN.

"As I said before," began the banker, "my career practically began in Wall Street. I have, from time to time, read printed articles from the pens of millionaires pretending to unfold to ambitious young men the secrets of their successes, but all those articles reminded me of sermons that have no bearing upon their texts. I don't believe in that sort of instruction.

"As I said before, I am a bear. My story shall bear directly upon its subject and I shall confine myself strictly to 'bear' facts.

"As I said before, I attribute my success to a mascot. Whether there are any left where mine came from, I can't say. I found mine in the Catskills, that picturesque group of mountains bordering the Hudson Valley where old Rip had his long sleep. I always wanted to sleep myself when up there; in fact, it was while I was sleeping that I found my mascot.

"But I am ahead of my story. As I said before, I am a poor story-teller.

"Now, the only large hotel in that region at the time I'm telling about contained a bevy of as pretty girls as ever I looked upon, before or since. It goes without saying that I put up at that hotel: but men were as scarce there then as they are now. Four very likely

young fellows and I had our hands full—and arms too, most of the time—entertaining the girls. The belle of the lot was a pretty, dashing, black-eyed heiress, an only daughter, who was chaperoned by her mama. Her ‘daddy,’ as she called him, came up Saturdays to pay their bills and returned to business in New York on Monday completely fagged out. Her mother talked like a ‘stock-ticker,’ and could do more gossiping and ask more questions in one minute than the ordinary four-year-old child in an hour.

“ Her chief accomplishment was match-making. She made it a science. Inside of twenty-four hours from the time I registered at the hotel she knew all about me, and much more than I knew. Her ‘old man,’ as she called him, I learned, was a Wall Street broker. I was the last one of the five fellows to arrive, hence, the most interesting. It seems that every one of them had made a dead set for the daughter upon first sight, and it goes without saying, I did.

“ As I said before, I knew the girl, this belle, to be rolling in wealth, for her mother had said so; she must be finely connected and a blue-blood, for the family coat of arms and crest were painted, inlaid, carved, sewed, crocheted and printed on everything they called their own, from stockings (I saw them on the hotel line, wash day) to dog-cart; it was even branded on the horses; and I was positive the parents wanted the daughter to grow up to be an old maid, for they averred it on all occasions.

“ The mother knew how to excite the hearts of young men. Nothing like opposition in parents to quicken a daughter’s marriage. I made up my mind at a glance. I fell madly in love with this girl. The mother at once opposed me. Thanks; it only helped matters.

“ If ‘daddy’ had made his pile by cornering the mush-

room market, it was apparent that his well-balanced spouse had undertaken to corner a nice young man with a fortune, who wasn't I. I caught the infection and, as I said before, tried to corner the daughter. And, it seems, the charming daughter was an advocate of reciprocity, and tried to corner me. The mother's favorite was wealthy; all I possessed was nerve, which the daughter liked. She had read so many novels that she was romance personified. The ordinary kind of courting was altogether too tame to suit her. Her lover, to find favor in her eyes, must be a Romeo, or Leander, or the like.

"Well, I was just in prime condition to act the part of almost any specimen of humanity ranging from a dime-museum freak to the brainiest dude that ever paraded Fifth Avenue. I knew my ancestral line four hundred years back, but that wouldn't admit me to New York's Four Hundred. Wealth alone must do it, and this girl's wealth. Besides, this girl was well descended. She said that her mama said she was a direct descendant of Virginia Dare, the first white child born in the colonies.

"Here was the chance of a lifetime, and, as I said before, I staked off my claim and began to work it at once. This is how I did it. As I said before, I shall confine myself to 'bear' facts—"

"Pardon interrupting," said the Journalist, "but you haven't 'said before' the young lady's name. With a name, we might more easily keep the winsome creature in mind."

"A very timely suggestion," said the banker good-naturedly. "To describe the girl, allow me to say, as I said before, I always had, and I still have, an abnormal weakness for pretty faces, dark eyes and fine forms. This unknown quantity of feminine loveliness, whether her name commenced with X or Y—"

"We shall presently Z," interrupted the comedian.

"And I trust it will be soon," observed the Professor. "I am beginning to feel like a monkey-faced owl in the dungeon-keep of San Marco."

"Having never been a monkey-faced owl," resumed the banker, "I cannot exactly sympathize with you. But, as I said before, it is immaterial what her name was; she went by the cognomen of Pinkie. It struck me at the time as being very aristocratic. I had never heard a whole girl called that before, nothing more than a small fraction of her—the little finger. As I said before, my four rivals appeared to have gone daft over her. I just let them fight it out among themselves, and devoted myself impartially to the other girls.

"This intensified Pinkie's passion for me, and made me popular with everybody, not excepting Mr. and Mrs. Pinkie. Pinkie, as I said before, didn't dream of my being in love with her."

"Excuse me," said the Drummer, "but you didn't say so before. Besides, we aren't half as anxious to hear what you said before as what you haven't said. Suspense added to the cold is demoralizing."

"Thanks for the advice," said the broker. "As I said before, I am a poor story-teller. To resume: before a



THE WALL STREET MAN.

month passed, my four rivals, each and all, proposed to Pinkie. I was ignorant of this—hadn't even suspected it, until one August day she shut herself in her room and didn't appear till next morning. Then I knew something was up. She wasn't ill, her mother said; she didn't know what ailed her; but I did, you can just bet, and I knew her mother did.

"I got wind of a private interview Pinkie was to have in the back parlor of the hotel after breakfast with these four eligible young men. Every one of them was well fixed except me. I wasn't to be counted in the game. Intuition told me it was her mother's doings. She didn't propose to take Pinkie back to the city not engaged. Here's where my nerve came in. Whatever the meeting was about, I couldn't exactly tell; but I had been slighted; my dander was up.

"I admit it was not a gentlemanly thing to do, but I stole into the parlor and secreted myself in the folds of a portière and awaited developments. Soon after the congress convened. I fancied then how it would be if I were only performing some great journalistic achievement as a war correspondent for a metropolitan newspaper. Nothing like love, my friends, to make a man assert his nerve.

"When Pinkie and her 'stringed' quartette filed into the room, my heart was beating loud enough to be heard in the next.

"'To be brief with you, friends,' sighed Pinkie (I wished at the time I could see her face), 'this is a very—I never attempted a more—it is always a delicate matter—I have found it difficult—no one could describe how—it is exceedingly mortifying to me to—I don't know how to begin—pardon, but where did I leave off?—you see it is unusual for a girl—my highly esteemed friends' (I could

now hear the poor fellows gasping and sighing), 'it is a matter of supreme importance—a question of life and—you see you are so—according to custom—my father thinks that—mama is so sensitive and—between you and me and the lamp-post—gentlemen! this is simply awful! but—'

"But at this point, when the four nonplussed lovers were struggling for breath and I was about to swoon, something heavy fell in a chair, and I recognized Pinkie's voice to moan, 'I can't marry you all.' Then four pairs of feet rushed out of the room for water, and I popped out of my hiding place. Pinkie had fainted dead away. I gently laid her on the floor, fanned her into life, told her my love, and was in the act of kissing her just as the others returned with a pump, which in their delirium they had wrenched from the well.

"The quartette entered singing a new tune, entitled 'What Nerve!' It wasn't encored, and they didn't repeat it. Pinkie acted confused. She sat up, blushed the color of the hotel barn, and said, with renewed assurance, 'Friends, as I said before—' "

"Several times before," interrupted the Don.

"—'I feel highly honored in receiving an offer of marriage from five such fine young men. But you have all been so companionable, I like you all so much, that I cannot determine which of you I like best. One time it is one of you, another time it is another. So, believing that if you all love me as you say you do you will be ready and willing to prove it, I have finally decided there shall be a fair contest of heroism and chivalry between you. Do I hear you all assent?' 'You do,' sang a quintette. 'Then it shall be a bear hunt,' said she; 'and the man of you who first secures a bear's brush by his own prowess shall have my heart and hand and parents' consent.' "

"And pocket," added the Journalist.

"Lady and gentlemen, you may imagine my astonishment, as well as amusement, when I heard that. I laughed at the absurdity of one's finding bears in that tame region. On the other hand, my four rivals eyed me and frowned. The meeting adjourned according to house rules, and the guests assembled for morning prayers. How I did pray for those gullible chaps! Then the four brave young men spent the rest of their day preparing for the bear hunt on the morrow, while Pinkie retired to her room and spent the rest of her day indulging in a nap.

"The hustle and bustle, cleaning of guns, and general excitement around the hotel, set the gossipy quid nunes of the resort half crazy with curiosity and concern.

"In the afternoon I went down-cellar while my rivals practised at the mark behind the barn. A cow, three hens and a crow fell victims to their marksmanship, while one bullet entered the kitchen and actually penetrated a tea biscuit as the cook opened the oven door, and was afterward swallowed by a ten-months-old child. I might here say the babe belonged to a Kentucky colonel. Now, when bees get to buzzing the honey forms, and, as I said before, the gossipers discovered the secret. The panic strained the very hotel. There hadn't been so much genuine excitement confined in so little space since the Olympic Games of Greece, or Roman Chariot Races.

"The chickens clucked about it, the roosters crowed over it, the cooks stewed over it, the babies cried about it, the old women 'Dear me'-ed about it, and the donkey kicked about it when two of the fellows drove him to a farm three miles off before feeding him—"

"Who wouldn't have kicked?" interrogated the Don.
"He *would*'ve been an ass not ter have kicked."

"It began to look to me as though Pinkie and the

other four took things in dead earnest. 'What!' thought I, 'hunt bears in these mountains? If there be one left, it wouldn't let a man get within sight of it.'

"Well, as I said before, the hunt was to be. And when the whole list of guests turned out at daybreak to give us a send-off I felt and acted very much ashamed. In the days of Virginia Dare they used to buy wives with pounds of tobacco, but to go on a fool's errand for a bear's brush was humiliating. Had I believed there were bears about, I should have felt differently, as I believe I said before. Hunting was my favorite sport. I was a splendid shot, had shot most everything from flying squirrels in Canada to blind fish in the Mammoth Cave; I had once exhausted a half-day—and my body—crawling on my stomach to get within gunshot of a deer, and after killing it found it to be a calf which had strayed from a neighboring farm.

"I now wished the woods were full of wild beasts. But I feared Pinkie and her parents were demented. Instead of appearing with a gun, I sat on the hotel stoop and whittled a pine stick with a little hatchet.

"'Ain't you going bear-hunting?' interrogated a live mummy, chewing on her ninety-ninth year.

"'Yes,' said I complacently.

"'Where is your gun?' she asked.

"'Up in my room,' said I.

"'You don't expect to hunt bears in the house, do you?' she persisted.

"'More likely to find a brush in my bedroom than in the woods,' said I confidently.

"'Mercy me!' she ejaculated, and her upper tier of false teeth dropped out, 'I'm afraid to go to my *own* room.' Her frizzled hair backed her statement.

"'This axe,' said I, half enraged and half amused,

' will fetch me a bear's brush just as quickly as a gun will fetch one to the other fellows. I'll see an elephant if I see a bear.'

"My rivals were attentively listening. If you'd seen the expressions on their physiognomies, you'd have guessed that they were wishing with all their heart and soul that some kind and merciful omnipotence would drop down in their midst and deliver them a written guarantee that they wouldn't see anything bigger than a baby rabbit.

"Long before a bear hunt was dreamed of every one of them had acknowledged never having hunted larger game than tom-cats on the back fence, or mice in the cellar, and then with only shaving-mugs and sling-shots, whereas they knew me to be something of a sportsman.

"Suddenly, an octogenarian with bald head, and whiskers reaching round the base of his brain, blew his horn (nose), and we five bold huntsmen set out on the chase, I with my toy axe, and the others with their 'loan exhibition' of antique guns capable of shooting at both ends. And the way they carried those guns was a caution. They all appeared to be less afraid of shooting themselves than of being eaten by bears. I suggested that we separate our party at once before a gun should separate some individual. They finally agreed to go in pairs, each pair taking a different route; then I drew an imaginary line through the centre of the angle formed by their routes and followed it—in the opposite direction.

"I watched their infernal machines till they were out of sight, and then set out leisurely for an old abandoned maple-sugar camp a mile or so distant. It was a fine day. The woodland ramble was delightful. I watched the woodpeckers peck, and squirrels tobaggan slide down slippery elms, and chuckled over the credulity of my timid rivals, and wondered how upon our return I should

be able to persuade the guests that I had not been in earnest, but had simply complied to please the rest and to prove to Pinkie that I was not a coward.

"At last I arrived at the camp, or what was left of it. A rotten, moss-grown roof, supported by two opposing walls of hemlock slabs, made one wonder how it had stood upright so long. There was nothing in it but black and gray embers, the ghost of the last fire. I was interested in a certain story, so I walked to a large tree, sat down on the ground, took out my book and read. I did not propose to tramp my feet sore on this fool's errand. If there were any real bears about inclined to be sociable, they could either stop and present their cards, or pass me by. I had great respect for bears and wished to preserve amicable relations with them, but there was only one kind of aristocracy that I was toadying to at present, and that wasn't bearish.

"Then, as I said before, that drowsy feeling came over me and I fell asleep. Not long after, I was dreaming a most absurd dream. It appears I was in my hotel room. Hearing a knock, I opened the door, and in walked a bear which graciously bowed, extended an ungloved paw with very long and dirty finger-nails, and politely said, 'I am delighted to see you; I have come to lunch with you.'

"The rest of the dream, friends, was a grim reality. I awoke to find my gigantic guest rooting in my pocket with a familiarity which bred contempt. To say the least, my astonishment was paralyzed, my reason ossified. I tried to persuade myself that it was all a nightmare, but the sense of smell and of touch combined with that of sight to disprove any such delusion.

"Before starting on the hunt, I had put in my pocket two ham sandwiches, a slice of frosted cake, and a large piece of meringue pie, all of whose delectableness brother

Bruin was complimenting with approving grunts embarrassing for me to hear. I watched him spellbound. The meringue was all over his nose and eyes, and if I had been in a balloon at the time I should have laughed. Here was where my linguistic attainments came in. I had never studied bear dialect so closely before, but from my interpretation, he was saying, 'When I finish my dessert, I'll take a ham sandwich, and by that time I'll want a drink of "red-hot" blood to quench my thirst, and I thank fortune it's all here before me.'

"My frost-bitten, blizzardized comrades, you may say it was very rude of me, but when I heard that I left the feast without asking to be excused, and the way my guest took to me was flattering in the extreme. Wasn't I busy though! I never knew it was possible for one to be so busy. I remembered of having in the past run so fast that games could be played on my coat tails, but never that kind of game.

"In two seconds I was on top of the shed with my hatchet and life in my hands. But men who rise rapidly in life are apt to fall, and I was no exception to the rule. The bear tried to run up the side of the shed, and it collapsed in a sort of parody on Samson and the falling temple. Amid the crash I half fancied I heard a human call, but I was in such a hurry trying to win an obstacle race that I concluded it must have been Bruin crying the start. Then I thought of a large red apple in my unmo-lested pocket, and though I was travelling like a balloon in a gale, concluded that if I would throw out ballast I should rise higher. I did so. It worked like a charm. Bruin stopped to eat the apple and I immediately arose to the top of a chestnut-tree. Then, when the bear finished eating and saw how I had outwitted him, he glared daggers at my hatchet and climbed up after me.



“VIOLATED ALL TRADITIONAL LAWS OF DESCENT.”

"Now, as I said before, I was in embarrassed circumstances. While I held the gavel in the higher house, I found my seat insecure. The gentleman from the backwoods called me down unmercifully. I was too dignified to reply. Then he took me for a plum and shook the tree. I was no longer unbending. A friendly hickory reached a long arm over to me, and, unlacing a shoe string and buttonholing my hatchet, I sprang to the arm of the hickory; but contrary to all expectations, the hickory limb bent and lowered me unhurt to the earth. I was on the point of running a race against time when I ran against an idea. 'This is the chance of my life,' I thought. 'Bears always back down trees, and I'll just lay for him and sever his head while his back's turned.' Bruin growled and roared with madness, and frothed at the mouth,—else it was the frosted meringue,—and then to my consternation and terror, violated all traditional laws of descent by starting down the tree head foremost. I couldn't account for it, except that he had assumed a certain position and, like human nature, didn't like to back down; I didn't know whether to run, or faint, or climb another tree.

"Then all at once I thought I heard Gabriel's trumpet, and I jumped with so little effort so high that I thought the earth had given way under me. I looked. I dared not believe my eyes. Bruin's tail was caught in the fork of the tree trunk, and there he hung, head down and crying for help, unable to back up the tree.

"It was now a question with him of gaining me, or losing his tail, and he wisely hung by his tail. If he hadn't you wouldn't be hanging to my tale. The instance only proves the vanity of dumb animals. Well, after the poor fellow had fretted and fumed and foamed awhile, I decided to release him. My limbs quaked and

my hair stood on end; if ever I needed a brush it was then and there.

"As soon as my blood got to circulating, I climbed the hickory, made the chestnut, and with charitable condescension cut the tail's bear off. I repeat, cut the bear off his tail, for he dropped and scooted for his lair, creating a vacuum in the air and transforming the wood into a howling wilderness. Then, after satisfying myself that there was not likely to be more trouble brewin', I secured the brush, descended, walked to the ruins of the shed, and sat down to think about my adventure and the easy and original manner in which I had won my Pinkie's heart and hand.

"Two or three times I thought I heard a human voice near by; now I was sure of it. It seemed to come out of the earth. Then I heard more distinctly, 'Is that you, Jim?' The groaning voice made me shudder. I wondered whether it was a ghost or the devil.

"'Yes, it's me,' I said ungrammatically.

"'Was it an earthquake?' again gasped a voice which I recognized as a deep bass.

"'Worse than that,' I said, 'a bear.'

"'Are you sure, Jim?' came the question, and it had a familiar accent.

"'As positive as anybody could be,' I said, 'without being the bear himself.'

"'Then for God's sake, Jim, help us! It's Billy and I,' and I recognized a voice of the quartette emanate from underneath the boards. I was shocked. How had Billy and Henry come to be there? They weren't under the shed when I looked in. They should be miles away. Impossible! Whatever I did was always open and above board. I pulled away the ruins without delay, and there lay a sight to behold: Billy unconscious, and Henry

mashed and bruised with an arm broken, shoulder dis-jointed and minus an ear. But Henry acted a hero. Ignoring his own pains, he rubbed and fanned Billy while I, failing to awaken him by firing a gun, set off in search of water. It occurred to me that only heroic measures could bring Billy to; so I loaded the gun with powder, filled the barrel with water, put in a couple of wads, stood six feet off and, aiming at his nose, fired. The idea worked to a T from the muzzle of the gun and a tree from the breech.

“‘Did lightning strike me?’ gasped Billy, opening his black drenched eyes and feeling of his red nose, where a gun wad had hit him.

“‘No, it was only the gun,’ said Henry—for I was not there to answer. I had turned a series of back somersaults and backed half-way up a tree before coming to a standstill, or sit still, on the ground at its base.

“‘What are you doing yonder,’ called Henry.

“‘Doing what the bear couldn’t do—back up a tree,’ I said. I showed the brush and explained how I got it. Then we hung ourselves in slings and limped to the hotel, where I handed Pinkie the bear’s brush. She was thunderstruck and elated. After she came to—for she had fainted in my arms—she inquired, ‘With whose gun did you shoot the bear?’

“‘I didn’t shoot any bear,’ said I, smiling. ‘Do you suppose I would be such a coward as to hunt a poor bear with a gun?’

“She gaped, and her eyes dilated, and she looked as though she beheld Goliath or Hercules himself.

“‘Why, how did you secure the brush?’ she asked.

“‘Why,’ said I, ‘I simply saw a bear, gave him a piece of pie, walked up to him, and then cut off his tail. No use spoiling a whole bear when I only wanted his tail.’

"Gentlemen, Mr. and Mrs. Pinkie just examined the bloody end of the bear's brush to prove they weren't dreaming, and then handed over the daughter without a word."

"And you married her?" queried the Journalist.

"Certainly," said the banker. "Not long after that adventure I read in the U. S. History that Virginia Dare, her family and the whole settlement were massacred, completely exterminated, by the Indians. It staggered me a little, at first, but when I saw her daddy's check for a cool half-million I revived."

"And what became of those other two hunters?" inquired the Preacher.

"Oh," said the broker, "we searched the woods three days before we found them. They had seen a bear and had dropped their guns and crawled into a figure-four (4) bear trap on their hands and knees and sprung the slide door. The trap was made of logs, and was so narrow that they couldn't turn round and raise the slide. They were almost dead from starvation. Only the cow's head that baited the trap saved them."

"But I should think they would have died of thirst," observed the Professor.

"Only an act of Providence prevented," said the financier. "The cow had died of water on the brain."

"Most extr'ordinary!" exclaimed the Lawyer.

"But," added the broker, "the most surprising coincidence connected with the event was that the girl's true name happened to be Ursula, which in Latin means 'bear.'"

"It is very difficult to believe," said Hero.

— "I think it about time to hear another poem," suggested the Doctor. "Are the comedian and the Lawyer the only bards in our party?"

"I hope so," said the Professor. "Nobody can imagine the agony I suffered in listening to that late effusion 'To a Hole.' It brought to mind at least a dozen painful recollections."

"And that awful parody on Beaumont and Fletcher," added the Preacher.

A short silence followed these remarks; and then the Journalist spoke: "In the admission I am about to make," said he, "I fear that I am venturing on dangerous ground, but it is nevertheless true, that for a number of years I have at intervals suffered from the effects of temporary aberrations of mind, during which distressing periods I have composed verses. Some of them produced upon certain friends damaging effects, while in at least three cases editors suddenly went mad from what, on investigation by specialists, was proven to be caused by their reading verses contributed by one Pythagoras Pod, a being of whom no one could find the slightest trace. I confess that I once wrote under that *nom de plume*, thus putting you all upon your honor not to betray my secret."

"I declare," said the broker, "the Journalist must sling ink to kill; I wish he'd tackle us with one of those weapons, just for luck. Our minds as well as our bodies have endured such excruciating ordeals here in this dungeon that I have no fear of even a poem having the slightest effect upon us."

"Well," returned the Journalist, "I await your pleasure. I feel my insanity coming on. What style do you prefer? I am ready for anything or any amount—one hundred words a minute for a half-hour will just about restore me to a rational state."

"Heavens! Is there no means of escape?" exclaimed the Drummer.

"Make 'im Pote Lariet," suggested the Don.

"Pinkie's remarkable claim of ancestry," continued the newspaper man, "puts me in mind of a certain acquaintance who claims to be a preadamite."

"A what?" interrogated the Don.

"A preadamite, a person believed to have existed before the time of Adam. Pinkie's claim that she was a descendent of Virginia Dare is dwarfed into insignificance compared with it, and the most remarkable thing about it is the irrefutable proof he gave me that his claim is substantial."

"You can't pull wool over our eyes," said the Doctor.

"The facts my acquaintance stated," returned the literary hack, "are indisputable, and if you will allow me, I will recite in rhyme the ingenious story which was told to me, and let you judge for yourselves."

CHAPTER XVI.

THE PREADAMITE.

A POEM BY THE POET LAUREATE.

“THERE lived two genealogists,
Sons of the Revolution,
Who, puffed with pride, walked side by side
In high self-estimation.
They claimed such ancient ancestry
Reached they but one conclusion :
None trod the earth of blood and birth
Their equal, in the nation.

“They challenged their acquaintances
On each informal meeting,
But tongues grew mute, none could dispute
Claims back so far in history.
At length these peacock disputants
Each other tried defeating ;
Their proofs high piled were all defiled
By falsity and mystery.

“They probed all histories secular,
Exhausted they the Bible ;
Until one vowed, in language loud,
He traced to Adam purely ;
Then scoring him unsparingly,
Nor slander feared nor libel,
He asked his friend, ‘ You don’t intend
To antedate man, surely ? ’

“ ‘ Aye,’ said the other pompously—
‘ And ’tis no mad delusion—
By cipher we can trace our tree
Beyond first man and madam ;

For I am a preadamite'
(His rival showed confusion),
'I beat you by a day, for I
Trace back to the Eve of Adam.'"

"Excellently proven!" exclaimed the amused widow, clapping.

And the astonished comedian quoted with affected jealousy:

"'This gallant pins the wenches on his sleeve;
Had he been Adam he had tempted Eve.'"

The Professor seemed to be much amused by the poem, and when asked what tickled him so said, "Joke—ha-ha!"

"The first man known to laugh at my jokes," said the Poet, unwilling to believe his ears.

"No, no, not your joke," corrected the Professor, "another joke. One thought suggests another. The poem reminds me of a bottle of joke—a funny experience of my school-days at Heidelberg."

"It must be a good joke to last so long," said the Doctor, "but I suppose you kept it in the bottle you mention."

"Not exactly," said the Professor; "that is, it may be in the bottle, somewhere, but I haven't seen it since."

"You are talking in riddles," said the Drummer. "You will confer a favor upon us by relating the story and make clear what you are talking about."

"Well," replied the Professor, "I may as well purchase my ticket now, I suppose;" and he sneezed twice, cleared his throat and began his story.

CHAPTER XVII.

COUNT ETCETERA AND THE BOTTLE OF JOKE.

A STORY BY THE PROFESSOR.

"WHEN I was a student at Heidelberg," began the Professor, "in the centennial year of 1876, Count von Fritz August Hoeberzellenhoffensteinhauserbrunnenhimmelbergensonntagblatzerlungtanzerhautbaden—"

The Professor was here interrupted in the very middle of a word by a heavy fall of a human body on the barren floor, accompanied by a moan which signified somebody had fainted. A half-dozen of the company sprang to his assistance, and the Doctor rendered what medical service lay in his power to resuscitate him. The person in a faint was the Tragedian. Such a fall would have killed an ordinary cat. He finally came to, muttered a few inarticulate words, and in broken accents inquired what it was that struck him. Upon being persuaded to believe it was merely a verbal indiscretion of the Professor, who would not repeat it, the actor resumed his seat and the Professor continued his story, after an ellipsis of half a word, variously estimated from one foot to two yards in length, and said:

"Count Etcetera was a linguistic, itinerant, superannuated, irascible, German hang-around at the Library, much to the personal annoyance of an American from my native city, whom I had first met at the University, and myself. We were much attached to one another, and from a dozen young countrymen I chose him for my room-mate. Neither of us had been home for eighteen months, and we naturally felt at times strong touches of

homesickness. Our respective parents wrote us frequently, as did also our brothers and sisters, but we gleaned little general news from their letters. We, like our American comrades, daily watched the mails for papers, and as the Museum, as the Library was called, failed to subscribe for a New York newspaper for our benefit, and the American Club was only recently organized, we had to depend wholly upon the kindness of our home friends for the news. Our little American colony, which hailed from various quarters of the Union, was thus well provided with a sort of 'universal knowledge' of home affairs. By a tacit agreement, too, we were in the habit of reading our journals at the Library, and leaving them in the reading-room for our comrades to peruse after we had finished.

"For one whole year our self-constituted American reading-room had existed without a discord, when suddenly appeared upon the scene Count von Fritz — *Etcetera*. We soon discovered him to be a very learned scholar, to possess a grumpy and disagreeable disposition, to be a stranger to gentlemanly etiquette and the natural German courtliness, and, finally, to swear equally well in a half-dozen languages. He spoke, wrote and read English almost as fluently as we did, and much better than we wished. He had, moreover, a most abnormal relish for newspapers, and an inordinate passion for blood and thunder. We heard that he was an old campaigner, and that the loss of his left ear in a battle with the French had generated this austere and grotesque fossil out of an 'angel.' A professor at the University had so expressed it to my chum, Freddy H——. One evening while we were reading of a big fire in New York our paper was taken suddenly from our hands. We looked up surprised and beheld Count *Etcetera* calmly walking to a chair to read it.

"Freddy was mad. He had a violent temper, whereas I was a sort of peaceful phase of human nature. I calmed him and took him direct to our room. Then Freddy burst into a passion and made believe the closet door was the Count and split it with his fist.

"'That's the last straw that breaks the camel's back,' said Freddy. 'He's grabbed papers before I could reach them, and appropriated them to his use the whole evening, time in and time out. I detest his miserable shadow. The Emperor ought to banish him.' And so my wounded fellow waxed wroth and retired and awoke next morning all smiles.

"I was quite as pugnacious as Freddy, but I was never allowed an opportunity to display my passion. When I saw Freddy in a rage it answered for me, too. Many a time had I watched the Count impatiently for an hour, with a bitter, revengeful scowl on my brow, waiting anxiously to read about my dear fatherland across the seas.

"The Count once said to me audaciously, 'Fine journals you have in America—interesting—graphic.'

"He had just read in a New York paper about an explosion of oil-tanks and a floating river of flaming oil, and he revelled in the article.

"My chum, Frederic H——, was pursuing a special course in chemistry. He was advanced in the science, and expected to graduate the next year. The hottest tempers are like electric storms—of short duration. Freddy had a sunny, jovial disposition, and was as full of mischief as any college student. His imagination was extraordinary; he was a genius in his way. He returned from the Laboratory one cold December day and, stationing himself before the bed where I reclined reading, said, 'Now, I say, old man, if a certain mongrel German puppy

doesn't know how to be polite, he ought to be taught. What say you?'

" 'If he were converted into a civilized being,' I replied, 'and the conversion were attempted in the University, there wouldn't be room for anybody else.' "

" 'Therefore,' said Freddy, 'as we have not finished our course here, and we desire to do so, I have taken upon my own shoulders the responsibility of converting him into something—I know not what, but I'll guarantee he'll be different from what he now is.' "

" So saying, he locked the door, and then placed a little phial of liquid on our centre-table, and took a chair. 'What is that?' I inquired. "

" 'Something for Count Etcetera.' "

" 'What! not poison?' I gasped. "

" 'Oh no,' said he. "

" 'Nor dynamite?' "

" 'No, a joke; in my delvings after universal knowledge, I have turned my attention more to the hidden properties of forces as they relate to man rather than to gold. I do not claim to be able to transmute base metals into the yellow ore, but to transmute a base animal creation into a high state of human civilization, or, perhaps, a still higher state which I am unable yet to describe, not having visited the realms above. In other words, I intend to make that uncouth fossil appreciate the merits of American journalism to a degree that shall cause a reaction of sentiment. If he lives through the transmutation operation and the retort doesn't burst, he shall have such a horror of American newspapers as will cause him to flee from their very mention. A being so corrupt can only be purged by fire—fire! fire!!' "

" Then Freddy's voice fell, and he added with a smile and a chuckle, 'Yes, this is a bottle of joke, a very won-

derful property, or chemical combination, little in use—a bottle of joke—ha-ha!’ and he laughed heartily.

“Then I fell to laughing, also; but, aside from the fact that I believed it must be a very capital joke to cause Freddy such paroxysms of mirth, I didn’t understand it, didn’t even know what I was amused at. ‘Explain the properties and virtues of your bottled joke,’ I said, when we became rational.

“‘Well, Flim,’ said he (my name is Flimberly), ‘I have in that phial a quantity of carbon bi-sulphide, in which I have dissolved a small piece of phosphorus. A few drops poured on the inside sheet of a newspaper, say to cover a spot three or four inches square, will enable that linguistic, dime-novelish devil in gray whiskers and eyeglasses to read the most graphic narrative of a conflagration that a journalist ever penned outside of Hades. In two or three minutes, perhaps four, the carbon bi-sulphide evaporates, and the dissolved, finely-divided phosphorus will flame spontaneously, and the newspaper will flash into a blaze in the Count’s very hands. But we must wait for the right paper—with an account of a rousing American fire.’

“Well, friends, when Freddy had finished, you may rest assured that the novelty and originality of this projected and very practical joke fairly sent me into spasms. I pictured aloud from my imagination the contemplated Library scene, while Freddy lay at full length on the bed and shrieked with merriment; and it was well that we laughed ourselves out then, for we dared not laugh much thereafter. We had to be cautious.

“We watched daily for the requisite fire-brand journal to arrive. The month of November went by, with no news of a fire. Report had it that Count Etcetera expected to go to Berlin. When, we knew not, it might be

to-morrow, or a fortnight hence. Freddy came in one night and opened up with a stirring criticism on the dullness of American papers. 'There must be plenty of fires in the States,' I said, 'but we don't get the right papers. The American boys at Heidelberg come from too slow, cautious, well-governed municipalities.'

" 'They must spend all their appropriations on the fire department,' said Freddy. And this was very much the manner in which we daily criticised municipal governments at home. But things could not go on that way indefinitely. There's an end to all things. Two or three more weeks had elapsed, and now Christmas was barely a week off. We heard from reliable sources that Count Etcetera would spend the Holidays in Berlin. Every evening for two months had we visited the reading-room and invited the Count to snatch papers from under our noses and out of our hands, till we quite enjoyed it. It was, of course, only because we were fortified with that reserve 'bottle of joke.'

" At last the coveted newspaper arrived. It was at the reading-room—the New York Herald of Dec. 8th, and directed to me in a familiar hand. Every other night we made it a point to be at the Library a few minutes before the time for Count Etcetera to arrive, and this night in particular. Our long trial of patience had caused a strain on our nervous systems. Freddy tore open the paper and read a fiery headline which completely staggered him. I then clutched the crumpled sheet and started to read with him, when suddenly our ears detected familiar footsteps on the hall floor. They belonged unmistakably to Count Etcetera. He was hanging up coat and hat, and this printer's devil would enter a half-moment later for his regular savage charge upon printer's ink. I wanted to read further, but Freddy was already unbottling the joke.

He had barely closed the sheets and resumed a deeply absorbed expression of countenance when Count Etcetera started across the reading-room. Several students of various nationalities were reading. Freddy's and my head were together. The Count paused behind our chairs a moment, and, no doubt reading the startling headlines:

“‘A HORROR OF HORRORS.

Wholesale Holocaust at the Brooklyn Theatre,

snatched the paper from our hands. We appeared to be more aggravated than ever before, in fact, we *were* so, for we were not hoping for anything as dreadful as that which the headlines portended, and were anxious to read further before being molested by our common pest. Freddy and I walked round to the opposite side of the table that we might see the fun at a safe distance. He whispered to me that he had doctored a larger space than was planned originally in order to keep damp longer and so allow the Count to get well into the article. We had a good view of the German's face. His eyes dilated, his body was restless in its nervous delight over the brilliant narrative, soon to be more brilliant still.

“One of the most disagreeable features of the Count's presence was his habit of mumbling, or reading, at times, half aloud. He would often soliloquize in a manner to disturb others studying or reading, and in his now excited state he read more audibly than ever before, and talked, and ejaculated, and ruffled the paper, and crossed one leg and the other, and relished the fire hugely:

“‘*What Daylight Yesterday Discovered.*

Men, Women and Children Buried in the Blazing Ruins.

Two Hundred and Eighty Bodies Recovered.

Affrighting Spectacles.

The Ghastly Array of the Disfigured Dead.’

‘Der Teufel!’ the German exclaimed. ‘Der Teufel!’

“‘*Heartrending Scenes in Identifying the Remains.
The Story of the Fire.
How it Swept in Four Minutes over the House.*’

‘Der Teufel! der Teufel!’ exclaimed the Count again, crossing his legs; ‘ist es ein Traum?’ He continued:

“‘*The Rush from the Galleries—A Wedge of Death.
Into a Pit of Fire.
No Water on Hand.
If I had a Hose I could have put out the Fire.*’

‘Himmel! Kein wasser?’ he gasped. Then the nervous Count dove into the graphic and soul-stirring text.

“‘The destruction of the Brooklyn Theatre on Tuesday night proves to be the most terrible calamity of its kind that has occurred in this country. What was first deemed to be an ordinary fire, naturally involving serious financial loss to the owners, the lessees and the actors, was really a catastrophe of the most heartrending character, causing, as it did, the loss of 280 lives.’

“‘Schrecklicher!’ sighed the Count, glancing at us, who were much more horrified than he.

“‘No theatre fire on this continent had so much terror lent it.’

“Here the Count skipped passages. He couldn’t read fast enough to satisfy his curiosity.

“‘They were thus doomed at a moment of pleasure and mental excitement over the mimic troubles of the dramatic personages in a play possessing features that touched the hearts of those who followed the scenes on the stage.’

“‘Der Teufel!’ exclaimed the Count aloud.

“‘At a moment when every eye was fixed on the painted scene and every ear strained on the utterances of the several characters the dreadful cry of “Fire!” was raised’ (the Count said ‘fire’ so loudly we thought the joke was at work), ‘and in a few moments after the entire building was filled with flame and smoke, and hundreds of men, women and children were suffocated and burned to death’ (why didn’t the joke work? It was just the time, I thought), ‘and their charred and disfigured remains buried beneath the ruins.’

“The titled German grew exceedingly excited, and rattled the paper, and stuck his feet on the rung of the chair ahead, and leaned so far back on his chair that he nearly upset himself.

“‘Der Teufel! der Teufel!’ he exclaimed.

“‘*Discovery of the Fire.*

“‘No more awful moment can be imagined than that when the fire was discovered. The play had proceeded to the last scene of the last act. Miss Kate Claxton was on the stage lying on the pallet of straw which the situation demands, and Mr. H. S. Murdock, who played Pierre, was leaning over her.’ (Here the German skipped some matter, and sighed heavily.) ‘It was natural from her reclining position which enabled her to look at the flies, the first flame caught the eye of Miss Claxton. It darted out like a flash of lightning’ (here I glanced at Freddy appealingly. Oh, what a place for the joke to assert itself!), ‘and began to traverse those mysterious upper regions of the stage into which the audience often peers with so much curiosity, as if it was only a brilliant meteor in the skies of the theatrical firmament.’

“‘Gott in Himmel!’ gasped the wonder-stricken German. His face was ashen gray. He shoved the chair ahead

of him spasmodically with his feet, as if he were in the theatre about to run, or he saw the flame of the joke. Freddy and I strained our eyes and ears. The Count read: 'Almost simultaneously with the sight which met Miss Claxton's gaze, she heard some one in the wings whisper, "The theatre is on fire." It was Miss Cleve's voice, and a moment later the whisper was repeated. "The theatre is on fire; look behind, for God's sake!"'

"Count Etcetera started violently and looked behind him so naturally that Freddy had to hide his face, disfigured by rebellious risibles. The German now let his eyes fall on the next column, beside the diagrams or 'Plans of the Interior of the Ill-fated Theatre.' The joke was slow, or else our impatience made time drag tardily.

" 'Stampede of the Audience.

" 'The terror of the moment was grand beyond description. Behind was the threatening, devouring flame, darting its fiery tongues and hissing a requiem of despair over the struggling mass seeking to escape its anger.'

" 'Merkwürdig!' the wild German ejaculated.

" 'Before was either safety or death. Soon even above them the fire raged and burned. The stage had become a tremendous volume of smoke and flame. Was there hope of safety or only a horrible death in store for them?'

" 'Der Teufel! Schrecklicher!' muttered the Count.

" 'No one stopped to reason; no one stopped to ask. The madness of panic was upon them and forward they rushed, each seeking only to save himself.' Here the Count shook spasmodically in his chair and dropped the paper as if to flee. But, collecting his senses, he continued to read the graphic account. He lost the thread of the text, but, after an omission of a couple of paragraphs, began:

“‘The stampede had scarcely begun until the scene became undescrivable in horror, and the sufferings of the multitude were matched only by the terror of the despairing crowd.’

“‘Here I had begun to despair of the joke. My faith in Freddy’s chemical ‘discovery’ wavered and I eyed him reproachfully, but he retained withal a calm and positive expression of self-assurance which prevented me from losing entire confidence in his ability as a scientist. To resume the paper:

“‘Almost immediately the front entrance became choked up. On the stairway just above the landing-place a woman’s foot was caught in the railing of the balustrade.’

“‘Der Teufel! Himmel help!’ exclaimed the sympathetic German. Freddy whispered: ‘He is getting humane, watch! the transmutation has begun!’ I strained my optics and held my breath, while the German held the paper.

“‘She fell, and the crowd behind her, pushed forward by those still further behind, fell over her. Crushed, wounded, dying, they lay four or five deep on the landing of the stairway, making escape for those who in their terror had caused the accident—’ The German shook the paper and gasped excitedly, ‘Merkwürdig! schrecklicher! wunderbare sache! Der Teufel! der Teufel!’ and continued, his face now close to the sheet.

“‘At this point the other students in the room who had observed the all-absorbing interest of our trio, caught the Count’s expressive exclamations and drew near our table. They could not understand English, but the German’s words and actions caused them unbounded curiosity.

“‘What a superb moment for the joke to work!’ I

thought. But I had given up hope. Freddy had certainly made a mistake with the chemicals. The Count began a thrilling passage.

"'Every moment, too, the fire was gaining headway. It reared and hissed and rushed. It licked up the paraphernalia of the stage with its fiery tongues—' but here the astonished and terrified German shook the newspaper and held it at arm's length, exclaiming, 'Vortrefflich deutlich! Der Teufel! Bin ich verrückt oder ist es ein schrecklicher Traum?' Freddy and I watched. We strained our eyes. A dark hole was burning in the very place he was reading. I smelt scorching paper. I saw the smoke. The account of the fire was certainly graphic enough now for Herr Satan himself to read. Surely the transmutation was working.

"Count Etcetera was ashen pale, his hair and whiskers stared, his eyes bulged, his mouth gaped widely, and then suddenly the paper burst into a blaze in his very hands, and the climax was reached.

"With a terrible shriek, 'Der Teufel!' the converted Count dropped the flaming paper and turned a back somersault on to the floor, voicing while in motion the diabolical exclamation, 'Zum Teufel mit den Amerikanischen Zeitung, voller Hollenfeuer!' Then the animated object scrambled to his feet and rushed madly across the room with his hair and whiskers flying, and his arms gesticulating violently, and crying in thrilling tones, 'Gott in Himmel giesze wasser auf mich! Bin ich verrückt oder toll? Himmel helf mir! Lasz mich lebend davon kommen! Der Teufel! der Teu—' but the voice was lost in the loud crash of broken glass as the maniac leaped madly through the window and escaped into the darkness, while still rending the crisp and quiet air with his awful cries of fright.

" Gradually the sound faded from our ears, until finally it subsided like the dying wail of a lost soul.

" I don't believe I ever wanted to laugh as much as I did then, but we culprits were as sober as undertakers. For a time we dared not stir. The joke had proven to be more practical than we had anticipated.

" On the other hand, the students present shouted with merriment as though they had provided the circus; and the fire consumed the unread news which we had so dearly prized, until all that remained of the Brooklyn fire were the ashes on the Library floor.

" That night Heidelberg was thrown into a state of wildest excitement by Count Etcetera's crazy performance, which was heralded everywhere by eye-witnesses, including Freddy and myself. Had our attitude been different, we should have been suspected. Luckily, there remained in view no evidences of our joke, save the paper ashes and the broken window-panes, and more fortunate still, Count Etcetera was known to be extremely eccentric, and hence was now thought to have gone crazy simply from natural developments.

" The townsfolk were busy at gossip. Some claimed that they had witnessed a man rushing through the streets, crying at the top of his voice, 'Der Teufel! der Teufel!' but he out-distanced pursuit and they knew not whence he had flown. Others said they had seen the same object, and interpreted his cries to say, 'Bin ich verrückt oder toll?' and still others heard, 'Himmel giesze wasser auf mich!' and some distinguished simply the exclamations, 'Der Teufel! der Teufel!' Freddy and I watched the German papers for weeks to come. Accounts were frequently published in towns along the Rhine, stating that a wild man had been seen at night running rapidly through the streets and highways and voicing frightful cries, but

no one could distinguish what he said, and at dawn next day no traces of him could be found. Some superstitious people claimed it to be a ghost that they had seen, and one old woman affirmed that one night she had seen the devil, for she heard him cry, 'Der Teufel!' and he so frightened her that she fainted. And it was only two years ago that the report was current in both Munich and Leipsic that a demon was lately seen flying over the roads of the suburbs with the velocity of the wind, shrieking, 'Der Teufel! der Teufel!' And I have no doubt, my friends, to be serious with you, though that episode happened nearly twelve years ago, that Count Etcetera is still running in his mad endeavor to escape from that unbottled joke, and crying, 'Am I crazy or mad?' 'Damn the American journals filled with hell-fire!' 'God in Heaven throw water on me!' 'The devil! the devil!'"

"A phial joke!" exclaimed the comedian.

"I am surprised that a Professor would play such a practical joke," said the divine.

"As our railroad director has ordered that no passes shall be issued," said the Lawyer, "I suppose we shall have to enforce the law with the artist, and we may as well bear the affliction now and have it over with."

"If his life has been as blank as his mind," remarked the Doctor, "much cannot escape lips."

"Mr. Artist," said the Professor, "I am sorry to hear so much jesting in regard to your lack of education. But I must say your case is quite unusual. I cannot believe that your home influence and early training have been improving to your mind. You have, however, demonstrated on several occasions to-night that you are somewhat of an athlete, and considering that, it is all the more a wonder you have not graduated with popular honors

at one of our leading colleges, in spite of your enormous mental vacuum. Why don't you read and improve yourself?"

"My deah Pwofessah," responded the Dude, "my gov-enah fawbade my weading. He is a vawy tempawate man—wat the Don cawled a pwohibitionist. One day, doncher know, I wead to him out of a book that 'con-versation makes a weady man, witing awn exawct man awnd weading a full man;' awnd my govenah—B'Jove!—he stamped his foot on the flooah awnd said, 'Andwew, nevah let me catch you weading again. Lawd Bacon waus a gweat philosophah, awnd he says 'weading makes a full man,' awnd it would bwreak my heaht to see you *full*;' awnd doncher know, I nevah wead aftah that. I only wote."

"You only what?" interrogated the Preacher, laughing.

"I only wote compwositions," said the Dude.

"We have an Emerson with us, who knows?" said the Journalist, aside.

"You'll have to look after your laurels," observed the still choking Professor.

"He has a good memory, to be able to quote Bacon," added the Tragedian.

"Perhaps he can remember a composition," suggested Hero, trying to control her own amusement.

"I got a pwize once faw a compwosition," remarked the Dude.

"A booby prize," whispered the Doctor.

"It's the only one I cahn wemembah," said the Dude.

"It waus a Autobiogwofy of a Banana."

"Give us the story of the banana, then," said the Drummer, "and we'll see if we can swallow it."

"I will twy to wecite it thwillingly awnd twagically," the Dude answered. "But you must pwomise not to

loff at me like the audience did, doncher know, when I wecited at Commencement. Awnd, B'Jove! nobody wote it foh me, I wote it all myself, awnd I won the pwize, doncher know. Quite an ideah, eh?—ha-ha! awnd the boys at school wehr vawy jealous—”

“Come, come!” stormed the Professor, “tell the story and let us be through with the ordeal.”

CHAPTER XVIII.

AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF A BANANA.

A COMPOSITION RECITED BY THE DUDE (ARTIST).

"I AWM only a bwight littah Banana comma, sweet-tempahed awnd dispwosed to do wight pewiod.

"I awm descended fwom a anchaunt awnd nobah family which bwears the classic name of Musa Sapientum semicolon; awnd became comma, by wight of inhehwetaunce comma, a natuwal membah of the ordaw of Musacoe pewiod. So 'oo see I awm a auwistocwat pewiod. (State bwiefly what 'oo know of Masonic awnd othah secwet ordaws comma, awnd give defwinition of 'auwistocwat' pewiod.)

"Owah beautiful mawnsion cwowned an height comma, the top of a tall twee comma, awn a owasis in the twopic sea pewiod. (Faw the benefit of the ignowant comma, state what a owasis is awnd give a bwief descwiptiion of complexion awnd pwofile of pawent banana-twee period.)

"God intended that I should gwow up to be useful aws well aws awnamental comma, awnd when I hahd wipened into matuwity twickle somebody's palate pewiod. It even twickeled me to think of it pewiod. (Descwibe sensation of being twickeled pewiod.)

"I uhly felt the inspiwation comma, but just when life looked bwightest awn most hopeful I begawn to be twoubled with wohms pewiod. (Descwibe symptoms aws 'oo haue of'en felt them pewiod.)

"A doctah of botany told the Govehnaw of owah pwovince that owah family waus awtogethah too pwolific

comma, awnd that it waus unhealthy faw so many to live togethah in one woom pewiod. I hahd about foah hundwed bwothahs awnd sistahs comma, awnd aws we wuh bawn at the same time awnd awl looked alike we wuh twins pewiod. (Give defwinition of 'twins' comma, awnd mention some ways youah bwothahs awnd sistahs employed to distwingwish one fwom anothah pewiod.)

"Owah welatives comma, the Plantains comma, wuh a lawgah awnd stwongah family comma, awnd we wuh always enwyng them theyah good health pewiod. (State how the Plantains diffuhed fwom the Bananas in colah of eyes comma, haiah awnd complexion awnd genewal fawm awnd feataw pewiod.)

"Humbold said owah family waus subject to only 00.632 paw cent. fat awnd about 73.900 paw cent. watah semi-colon; hence 'oo see owah bwodies must be wavy lean awnd owah blood extwemely thin pewiod. (Who waus Humboldt intehwogation? Defwine paw cent. awnd decimahs awnd extwact the cube woot of .00000 pewiod.)

"Owah family waus soon sepawated awnd began to impwove in health pewiod. Then comma, shawtly aftah comma, dawned the dahk day of my life colon: a bwack comma, naked comma, woolly-headed negwo climed up into owah home (descwibe chewing-gum twee) comma, awnd seized owah whole family of bwothahs awnd sistahs (state why didn't take pawent twee also) comma, awnd pwacked us alive in a big bahwel of gwass comma, just like muhdewahs do sometimes wif theyah wictims comma, awnd shipped us to a faw distant countwy which I hud waus called New Yawk pewiod. (Look up watio of human beings who twavel in bahwels pewiod. How long since New Yawk became a countwy intehwogation?)

"We found owah quatahs so close we could hahdly bweathe comma, awnd when we weached New Yawk

some bananas hahd died wif wohms comma, othahs fwom sea-sickness comma, awnd we who wemained alive wuh taken out in a comatose state pewiod. (Demonstwate sea-sickness awnd state when Comatose state waus admitted into the Union pewiod.)

"As soon as we hahd weived in the fwesh aiah a Italian bought us awnd cawied us to his house comma, which wesembled owah old home because it waus so close awnd so many lived in one woom pewiod.

"But we wuh tiud fwom twävel awnd homesick comma, awnd sistahs sang 'The old home ain't what it used to be,' pewiod. (State who wote the song awnd how it diffahs fwom the clog-dauince pewiod.)

"We wuh vawy gween befoah we left home comma, but twavel makes people wipe pewiod. (Pictaw the gwand mountain scenery awn youah voyage pewiod.)

"We wuh suhpwised awnd hu't when the duhty Italians spwead us awn the flooah awnd slept awn us faw a bed pewiod. (If audience ahr sensitive awnd hawve delicate appetwites comma, bettah mention that they kept theyah clothes awn pewiod.) It was an awfaw expewience comma, but they said it would make us yellow awnd wipe comma, awnd enable me to moah quickly fuhfill my mission of twickling somebody's palate pewiod. (Mention when awnd whaah the fuhst mission waus established awn the Equataw comma, awnd give the altitude of the Equataw pewiod.) I longed faw that day to come faw I imagined it would be a most heavenly sensation pewiod. (Descwibe heavenly sensation pewiod.)

"By the time we wuh taken up fwom the flooah comma, some of us hahd died fwom consumption comma, awnd the west of us wuh vawy bilious-looking pewiod. (Add a few wemahks to make cleah who it waus that hahd the consumption pewiod.).

" I hahd pains in my sides awnd cwamps awnd some of us wuh mashed into jelly pewiod. We wuh taken to a hospitah called a fwuit stoah comma, whaah we wuh watched awnd petted each day semi-colon ; awnd stwange to say comma, we hahd gwown so pwetty that we wuh hung in a show window faw people to look at pewiod. (Descwibe youah puhsonaw expewience of being hung comma, awnd state that it waus faw the cwime of living pewiod.)

" I did not like this pubwicity comma, awnd complained of it pewiod. One day a beautifaw lady stopped comma, awnd admyahed me comma, awnd affectionately pwinned my sides till I fell to a laughing pewiod. I suppose I looked sweet-natawed comma, faw she handed me to hehr littah son awnd paid five cents faw me pewiod. I didn't know at the time what the money waus faw comma, but alas exclamation ! I since found to my sowwow it waus faw my funewah expenses pewiod.

" The boy gwew vawy familiah faw such a shawt acquaintance pewiod. (Quote adage awn familiahity awnd contempt pewiod.) He waus so elated to meet me that in his attempt to hug me he completely lost his head comma, awnd bit off mine pewiod. His mothaw scwolded him awnd said he should haue waited till he got home comma, but aws I hahd soiled his new kid gloves he hahd bettah eat me up pewiod.

" These wuhds almost pawalyzed me wif fwight pewiod. Awl my past life came up befoah me comma, aws in cases of dwounding people pewiod. (Explain cleahly faw the benefit of those who nevah dwounded pewiod.) Then the mothah gwabbed me by the neck awnd stwipped me down to the middle awnd handed me back to hehr son pewiod.

" I waus so enwaged at this cwuelty awnd indecency

that I just got my dandah up awnd pwoked the expwosed half of my body down the boy's windpipe awnd almost choked him to death pewiod. I much pwefuhed to choke the lady comma, but the boy waus smallah awnd easiah to handle pewiod. (Add a few wemahks awn the distwessing agonies of choking pewiod.)

"Duwing his convulsions the boy dwopped awl that waus mawtal of me upawn the wawk comma, my clothes slid off comma, awnd my naked body waus expwosed to widicule pewiod. I nevah waus so ashamed befoah in awl my life pewiod. (To make moah emphawtic comma, tell the audience to pictaw themselves in that condition pewiod.)

"Luckily comma, howevah comma, nobody appeahed to notice me until the boy stopped gagging awnd coughing awnd sobbing awnd pwicked me up awnd bwushed off the duht awnd squeezed the puddin' out of me (if the pwincipal fwowns comma, omit slang) comma, while the mothaw hailed a stweet-cah pewiod. (Expwain the diffewence between a stweet-cah awnd a tomato-cahn pewiod.)

"He said I waus a slippewy thing comma, awnd he didn't mean to let me escape a second time pewiod. Meanwhile I kept my eye peeled awn my lost swoot of clothes pewiod.

"Pwesently a tawl comma, ewect comma, nicely dwessed dude came along swinging a cane comma, awnd stepped awn my clothes comma, awnd immediately left the uth pewiod. Aftaw tweading awnd swimming awhile in mid aiah comma, he weturned to uth awnd cut up the most wondahfaw awntics awnd swoah tehvably (stwike a twagic attitude awnd sweah like a sailah faw two minutes comma, awnd tell the pwofessah to go to hayal) comma, awnd stamped awn my pooah swoot of clothes comma, awnd

then wepeated the pewfawmance comma, awnd fell down awnd stepped awn his eye appahwently dead pewiod.

"Then a fashionable lady wif a littah dog awn a stwing stepped upawn my clothes comma, awnd completely spoiled them dash—Oh comma, my exclamation! awnd her clothes too pewiod. It waus a most disgwaceful pwoceeding pewiod. (If wuhds fail to expwess comma, fuhnish sketch or fwoatogwaph pewiod.)

"I hahd nevah seen a lady stand awn her head in sweet costume befoah comma, awnd it shocked my modesty awns much awns it shocked her pewiod. (Stand on youah head on the dictionawy pewiod.)

"Then occuhed anothah intewesting feataw of the show pewiod. The way that pug dawg pehfawmed waus pehfactly exkwoociating pewiod.

"A big fat policeman wan to stop the pehfawmance comma, awnd take up the lady awnd awest a urchin who waus hoff sca-ahed to deaf semi-colon; but he accidentally stepped awn my clothes awnd tuhned the handsomest double-back somahsault I think I evah saw in all my bawn days pewiod. (If audience ahr dewotees of athletics comma, tuhn a back somahsault off the pwofessah's desk awnd wemove youah shuht in mid aiah wifout distuhbing outah gahments pewiod.) Why comma, when my littah bwothah tumbled out of owah family twee awnd tuhned foah somahsaults comma, he didn't pehfawm hoff so gwacefully pewiod.

"Aftah fust pwicking himself up comma, the cop pwicked up my soiled awnd town swoot of clothes awnd thwew them into the guttah comma, awnd said 'Damn' exclamation! (If ladies ahr pwesent comma, say 'damn' to youahself pewiod.) I hahd hahd my wevenge comma, awnd I pwoposed to die like a martyrhw pewiod.

"But I think I should much pwefuh to be buhned at the



"AWND FELL DOWN AWND STEPPED AWND HIS EYE."

stake comma, if I wuh to live my life ovah again pewiod. (Mention some famous twee that waus buhned at the stake pewiod.) I waus dying a slow tawtuah pewiod. I waus already in the coma state pewiod."

"You've been in the comma state for the last half-hour!" exclaimed the exasperated Doctor, interrupting.

"The boy nibbled me comma, then licked me comma, then licked his fingahs comma, dash—how I did want to lick him exclamation! dash—then looked out of the cah window comma, then smiled awn me fwondly comma, then nibbled me again pewiod. (Demonstwate pehfawmance by sucking youah thumb pewiod.)

"But I boah my affwicktion uncompwainingly to the end pewiod. The cah suddenly stopped comma, awnd the cannibaws got off pewiod.

"I twied to weach the boy's windpipe comma, but I waus too exawsted pewiod. Then the boy tossed me down his thwoat awnd I gave up the gwost pewiod. (Heah dive off the stage into the audiaunce comma, or out of the window comma, if one is neah comma, to pwo-duce a thwilling effect awnd move all to teahs comma, awnd dash—youahself out of existauce pewiod."

"Oh!" sighed the pained Professor, endeavoring to subdue his merriment. "What a relief to know that that awful *period* is past!" Indeed, he voiced the sentiments of all.

If the reader still entertains a doubt that the composition was composed by the Dude's schoolmates, he has more faith in the fellow's intelligence than I have. For one must admit that, botanically, the banana's autobiography is not without merit. It shows deep research.

"His life cannot be other than a failure," said the Lawyer.

"I have a horse that's got more intelligence," observed the Wall Street man.

"No more brains than an ass," remarked the Drummer.

"An ass!" ejaculated the Don, laughing; "be guy, I reckon if yer had ever heered a real ass yer would think his brayin's wuz th' biggest part of 'im."

"The broker's reference to intelligent horses," said the Preacher, "recalls to my mind a most remarkable pony my cousin once owned,—and thereby hangs a tale."

CHAPTER XIX.

THREE TO ONE.

A STORY BY THE PREACHER.

"It was both my misfortune and my privilege," began the Preacher, "to be called five years ago to the Third Methodist Church in a certain Eastern city, a misfortune in that the church was one hundred thousand dollars in debt, and a privilege in my being permitted so worthily and so successfully to serve my Master and fellow man as to cancel that indebtedness within two years; at the end of which time, in consequence of my indefatigable labors, I found myself much impaired in health. My physician ordered me to take a complete rest, and advised me to go into the mountains somewhere.

"My large-hearted and appreciative congregation voted me an indefinite vacation with a liberal check, in case I should remain away too long, and supplied the pulpit in my absence. The doctor said I should have out-door life, and that roughing it in camp in the backwoods would soon restore my constitution.

"A cousin, residing in Pike County, Pa., learned of my indisposition, and in kindness of heart invited me to join him on a hunting excursion into the Pike County forests. We might be gone two or three weeks, and were likely to hunt big game. As such would require big, strong men, with big appetites, he wished me first to visit him in Wild-cat Centre, a very lively little town, and ride horseback with him for a fortnight; and he assured me of a 'big' time.

"Needless to say, I was soon domiciled in Cousin Joe's comfortable cottage, and amenable to his kind and constant endeavors to bring me back to health.

"Wildcat Centre is in the centre of a wildcat region, hence its name. The forests were expansive, the hills imposing and picturesque, the climate salubrious and invigorating, and Joe's riding-horses superb. He placed his Arabian pony at once at my disposal. We rode five miles the first day, ten miles the second, fifteen miles the third; but, of course, we did not continue the arithmetical progression indefinitely, else I should be riding thousands of miles to-day. My appetite recovered. I slept delightfully; in fact, I was sleeping most of the time when I was inactive. I even went to sleep at times on horse-back.

"I might here mention an equine eccentricity which characterized that Arabian pony, 'Nimble.' He had an extraordinary memory. He possessed the imitative faculty of a parrot, though of a different form. Poll talks. Nimble acted. If we stopped at a farmhouse for a drink of water, Nimble, a week hence, in passing the house, would walk up to the same gate and stop of his own accord. One day he caused me considerable embarrassment. I hitched him to the buggy to take a pleasant and very churchly young lady for a drive, and during an absorbing conversation with my companion, while driving through the main street of Wildcat Centre, at a time when the whole congregation of Joe's church seemed to be out shopping, I was suddenly brought to the realization that Nimble had stopped. I glanced about and discovered ourselves at the curb, directly in front of a popular liquor saloon. My companion blushed and I showed much confusion. To explain was useless. I whipped up the stubborn pony and later on remarked, 'Most extr'ordinary

horse.' I said no more. Of course, I had never stopped at the saloon, but I did not wish to say anything to incriminate Joe. I fancied he had been there. My drive that day was not over-enjoyable.

"My cousin afterward explained that he had, a month before, stopped to consult with the saloon-keeper about repairing the town roads.

"Now Joe was a good, jovial fellow, what you would call 'good company.' We daily took long rides together, except on the fourth and fifth days of my visit, when I was compelled to eat off the mantel; but Joe occasionally told long stories, and sometimes had to awaken me in my saddle.

"Just at that period the country about was thrown into the wildest excitement and indignation by the mysterious murder of a wealthy farmer. It was the talk of the whole State. Detectives and posses were at work everywhere endeavoring to capture the murderer. So you see there was plenty of life in Wildcat Centre, plenty to engage the body and mind of a visiting citizen of the East. At last Monday arrived, the day before our long-planned excursion to the woods. After lunch we took the horses to the blacksmith's to be shod, and afterward started for a ride to Bear Bluff, three miles away. It was a glorious day. I felt in excellent spirits. Joe told some large stories of adventure, and we discussed our anticipated hunt, and the necessary accoutrements we should take with us, and my last excellent rifle-shots—for I had been practising at the mark. And so the time sped.

"Before I knew it we were off next morning on our journey, leaving Wildcat Centre far behind us. Our day's ride to the woods was devoid of any incident worth mentioning. A bow-legged, wizen-faced, though apparently thrifty, farmer received us, stabled our steeds,

supped and lodged us, and agreed to take care of our horses until we should emerge from the woods. I will say here I was forcibly impressed with the paradox of our host's being a farmer. Joe said he was a farmer, and I believed Joe to be a truthful man. He showed us a barn full of grain and hay and a cellar full of potatoes, and when I asked him what he paid for grain and potatoes he said that he didn't buy them. He looked as if he would not steal; and I knew potatoes and hay did not grow on trees. There was but one loophole to the argument that they fell from heaven: they must have grown in the rocks.

"Excepting trees and fences and buildings, I could see nothing *but* rocks. After supper I asked the farmer how he sowed his crops. 'Shoot 'em inter the ground with a cannon,' said he. Then he took me to the woodhouse and showed me the cannon. I was schooled to believe in the canon law and I would not doubt him. The farmer struck me as being a genius. I proposed, upon reaching Hoboken, to recommend the idea for transforming the sheer sides of the Palisades of the Hudson into pastures for sheep-grazing.

"But to resume the hunting trip. We tramped all next day before we reached the log cabin which was to answer for our camp. Our first night in the woods, within barred doors, ten miles from habitation, with no other companion than Joe's collie, 'Budge,' was novel and full of interest.

"A bear growled, and scratched on our door at midnight, and awakened me, and set Budge half crazy. We found next morning no bear in sight, but the evidences he left on our door assured us that the ambitious fellow would make his mark wherever he might locate. After breakfast we set out on his trail. In a couple of hours

Joe and I became separated. I had a compass, so I decided that, after a short rest at the foot of a tree, I would endeavor to return to camp. Budge was with Joe. I sat down, and lay a moment on my back, and then my late disposition to sleep capriciously closed my eyes. I was soon dreaming of the Babes in the Woods. It is queer, when one pauses to think, how dreams are sometimes suggested. Imagine my surprise when, upon awaking, I found myself literally covered with leaves. I awoke by degrees, fortunately, coming to consciousness before stirring a muscle other than my eyelids. At once I realized my awful predicament. A strong animal odor told me that a panther, pursuant to an instinct peculiar to that family, was covering me with the sole intention of going for her young.

"The leaves, she reasoned, would prevent my escape. I heard her stealthy tread, and detected her pauses, and divined her repeated efforts to cover my big feet. Then I heard her steal away. I waited a moment, breathless and prayerful, not knowing when to stir, fearful of rising too soon or too late. I was nearly paralyzed with fright, and did not consider my life worth a farthing. Presently I arose nervously and quietly, and observing no panther about, stuck the trigger-guard of my rifle in my teeth, and climbed a tree in a hurry. I would, when armed, have tackled a single panther, but not knowing whether this one's children were teething or old enough to vote, I chose discretion as the better part of valor. And I acted in the nick of time. I had not more than reached the first limb when I heard a very significant stir in the bushes, and observed Madam Panther with three fair-sized kittens prowling and crouching for a grand leap into the lap of luxury. Madam Panther was a devoted mother and believed that charity should begin at home. Sud-

denly, with a terrific screech which penetrated my very marrow, she gave a mighty bound and scattered the leaves and tore up the earth savagely.

"Her prize had escaped. She realized it all. She was embarrassed, remorseful, enraged. She looked at her kittens and begged pardon, and the kittens cried out their heartfelt disappointment, and told the mother she was a fraud—"

"An un-feline fraud," interrupted the Lawyer.

"The gentleman in th' corner will please drop that crow-bar," observed the Don.

"He will perpetrate another pun at his peril," added the Drummer. The narrator resumed:

"And, in fine, the show was so strange and grotesque and exciting to me that I just feasted my eyes while the panthers moaned with hunger.

"My enemy smelt mischief in the air—so did I. She turned her head to the right and to the left; slowly but sharply her eyes scrutinized every object and penetrated every vista; gradually and suspiciously she raised them till my huddling body came within the range of their sight, and then, Oh!—then a great mouth opened, and a glistening set of savage teeth challenged my life. It was but for an instant, for with a heartrending scream she crouched to spring up my tree. But she was too slow. I had come to my senses and taken sure aim, and my finger had pulled the trigger without my knowing it. Madam Panther bit the dust and nobly died for the honor of her home.

"Presently I heard a gunshot. I concluded it must be Joe. Then I heard a dog bark and I was positive. I began at once to despatch the savage, half-grown kittens so as to save Joe and Budge a possibly overmatched encounter. What a nice story I should have to relate to

my country cousin, and what a lot of trophies of the hunt I should present.

"But to my surprise, instead of Joe and Budge stepping into view, there appeared three determined-looking men accompanied by bloodhounds. Their keen eyes placed me at once, and with astounding audacity two of them leveled their guns at me and commanded me to descend.

" 'That is exactly what I propose to do,' I said coolly; 'I was expecting my cousin and his dog, who are hunting with me, instead of yourselves. I have just this moment got rid of my enemies, as you see.'

" 'I reckon they hain't all dead yet,' one replied, taking a rope from his shoulder. What could they mean? Were they desperadoes, highwaymen, or the murderers of the farmer? I stood before them fearlessly, wondering at my courage and puzzled at their intentions.

" 'We've been lookin' fer yer three days,' said the second man, calling away a hound which leaped about me threateningly, licking his jaws. 'Yer th' man w'at killed Jim Simpkins in cold blood, an' yer needn't deny it nuther. If yer open yer jaw I'll plug it with lead.'

"I then became frightened. Oh, if only Joe and Budge were with me! I was grossly suspected of a foul crime and was denied the privilege and the lawful right of speaking a word in self-defense.

"While one man held a pitch-pine torch and another his ready rifle, the third advanced with the rope, and fashioning a slip-noose with it threw it over my head. Death appeared to be inevitable, so I resolved to speak in my behalf at all hazards. I should die any way, and I preferred being shot rather than lynched.

" 'Gentlemen,' I said boldly, 'you are justified in searching for the murderer, but you have the wrong man.'

"One fellow leveled his rifle at my head, while another

proceeded to tie my hands behind me. I neither stirred nor winked. Continuing, I said, 'I am a minister of the Gospel, camping out for health and recreation. My cousin, Mr. Joseph Bunting of Wildcat Centre, whom you may know, became separated from me an hour or two ago. I am innocent of any crime other than killing these panthers in self-defense. God in Heaven is my Judge.'

" 'God may be yer Judge,' said the hangman, 'but we're the jury, an' we render th' verdict that yer a brazen liar an' murderer, an' yer goin' ter pay th' penalty in th' courtroom what is right here in these woods.'

"He drew the slip-noose close to my neck. I almost fainted. Then, with the rope in his teeth, he climbed the tree which I had just vacated, swung it over a limb and descended. I kept my eye upon my captors, but my thoughts prayerfully on Heaven, beseeching God's mercy with a degree of earnestness and devoutness that I had never felt before. Both men clutched the rope, and one said, with thrilling austerity, 'Any man what'll shoot down a poor family of panthers what're cryin' fer their dead mother would butcher anythin' that come in his way, from an ant ter a giraffe, er baby ter a rich farmer. Circumstantial evidence is agin yer, an' yer must hang.'

"(Why didn't Joe and Budge come in time to save me?) 'Have yer anythin' more ter say why yer shouldn't hang like a dog?' the foreman asked.

" 'I am innocent,' I gasped. 'The vengeance of Heaven will fall upon you with the weight of a mountain.' Then I raised my eyes appealingly to God and cried aloud for His mercy. At once an awful jerk tightened the rope under my throat and, lifting me into mid-air, dropped me suddenly upon the earth—in my cousin's dooryard. I came to consciousness with a clothes-pin in my teeth and a white shroud covering me. I thrust off the sheet, and

looking up I saw the clothes-line dancing over me, and heard Nimble neighing at the barn door.

"I had not started on my hunt. It was still to-day and not to-morrow; it was the Monday afternoon that I had the pony shod.

"Joe, it seems, after telling a marvellous story, had cantered ahead of me, and I had, according to habit, fallen asleep in the saddle. Nimble had taken a roundabout road of his own choosing—one which I had ridden him over some two weeks before—and had landed me in the doorway with striking emphasis. Although I was obliged to postpone the hunt a whole week until my back and spine had recovered from the bruises and lameness, I was nevertheless grateful for being hung by nothing more stable than a horse and a clothes-line."

"Ruther a bang-up story," said the Don.

"A remarkable coincidence," added the banker, "that you should have dreamed of being lynched, and at the same time be actually trying to commit suicide with a clothes-line."

"Oh, no," observed the Doctor, "it is an accepted and well-established theory that dreams comprising events which it would require days and weeks to act consume an almost infinitesimal period, a fraction of a second. The domine's whole dream undoubtedly took place the instant the clothes-line caught him under the chin, and as he had heard the story of the farmer's murder his mind was naturally prompted to work out a phantasm that would harmonize with such an incident."

"But," added the Professor, "what strikes me as being more extraordinary still is that he dreamed of awakening from another dream in the woods, and that the leaves which covered him prompted him to dream of the Babes in the Woods: a dream within a dream, as it were."



"AN AWFUL JERK TIGHTENED THE ROPE UNDER MY THROAT."

"I see," said the Doctor; "it is a singular case, or rather, a plural one, I should say. I shall note it."

Leander, who had fallen asleep during the ecclesiast's narrative, called out in his sleep, "Nay, nay!"

"He neighs like a horse," said the Lawyer.

The Don shouted and threw an empty plate at the half-hidden bed, which disturbed the comfort of the drowsy occupant, who yawned loudly.

"Your dream, Mr. Comedian, was a regular horse," commented the pedagogue.

"Not much," objected the actor; "it was a wild dream of an old flame of mine."

"Well," argued the Professor, "you will admit that a nightmare is a wild dream?"

"Somewhat."

"But a mare is a female horse?"

"They say so."

"A horse that prowls about at night is a night-horse?"

"Very likely."

"A nightmare is a night-horse?"

"Presumably so."

"You admitted your wild dream was a nightmare; 'things equal to the same thing are equal to each other,' and, therefore, your dream was a horse."

Leander was now very wide awake. "You are a logician," said he. "Let me give you a horse of another color."

CHAPTER XX.

THE HERO OF RASBURY.

A STORY BY THE COMEDIAN.

"ONE scalding July morning in 188—,—well, not many years ago, I was hustling through the Jersey Central Station, when a familiar voice shouted 'Halloa!' at me. I glanced to my right and beheld to my surprise my friend Bigmore.

"'Where in the name of common sense are you bound this hour of the day?'" was his inquiry.

"'I'm looking for a refrigerator-car to take me to Greenland,' I said, and hurried past. The perspiration rolled down my face and neck like vapor on a teakettle, and a big lump of jealousy began to boil in my heart. Instinct told me that Bigmore hailed from Rasbury, the very spot I intended to visit.

"I carried a haberdashery establishment in one hand and a rose greenhouse in the other. My train was due to start. The engine puffed and fumed and appeared to be in a terrible sweat, so I knocked down the Pullman porter with my dressing-case and stepped aboard as the train started off.

"I felt an exuberant satisfaction in escaping from the scorching city in a condition only less exhausted than that of a baked clam. It was just luxury to recline on those soft linen-covered cushions, and shake your fists at Jersey mosquitoes, and feel that you were actually creating a stir—in the atmosphere.

"Presently a sweetness more fragrant than the odors

wafted from the Oranges in the distance arose from the American Beauties under my chair, and set me meditating on the important offices they were to administer. Then I rang for the porter, and tipped him, and bade him tip some water on the flowers.

"Bigmore had been flirting with my sweetheart Sally Waters, that was certain. The more I thought about it the deeper I thought, and before I knew it about two hours of time and sixty miles of space squared accounts and dropped me at Rasbury Park. There the sunshine in my heart dropped to an angle of 45 degrees. I looked cross-eyed trying to discover Sally. She was not there to meet me, and it made me feel worse than General Humidity in a pitched battle with Uncle Sol. She must have gone to the train with Bigmore, and a pretty early hour at that.

"You see, Bigmore and I first met Sally the same evening. It was at a hop. Judging from the number of dances he had with Sally, it was plain that he was daft over her, and it was my jealousy of this rival that induced me to bisect my vacation and immediately devote the first half in worship at her shrine. The Goddess of Love seemed to favor me. Before the week closed Sally and I became engaged. That was just two weeks previous to the momentous pilgrimage I am chronicling, the second half of my vacation. What did Sally look like? Well, to begin with, she was just my style of a woman—handsome, plump, of medium height and finely formed—and she manipulated a pair of large, gray, lustrous eyes in a way to put a Spanish señorita to the blush. She never showed her pearly teeth, except when they dropped out of her mouth (we must not expect a girl to be perfect), her hands and feet were small, and there was nothing stuck up about her but her nose. That was sometimes in

my way. A nice, jolly, all-round peach was Sally Waters, and she could swim like a porpoise.

"But I forgot to mention her 'chiefest' charm, as Shakespeare would say, her crowning glory, her hair. And such hair! A handsomer head of hair never hid a woman's pate—silken, wavy, of a soft shade of brown, thick and long, why, it reached way down below her waist, and when she wore it done up on her head she didn't require an opera-bonnet to protect her brains from freezing, either.

"Friends, let me say right here, if there is one thing in all this world that I do love to see, it is a fine head of hair. I made Sally promise me that in our married life she would wear her hair down over her shoulders once on week-days, twice on Sundays and holidays, and three times on my birthday.

"One day my enthusiasm over her hair prompted me to ask her pointblank if it was all her own.

"Of course, it was an impertinent question for one to ask, but she only looked a little surprised, and hesitated, and, seeing I was sincere, said, 'Why, of course it's mine! Do you suppose for a moment that I would wear any body else's?' But she wasn't offended. I thought she must have a wonderfully even disposition. That same day after dark we met at the town pump, and sat on a rustic bench, and listened to what the wild waves were saying until we began to say nice things to one another, and finally agreed that early in the autumn we would have a minister couple us.

"Just then a cop yelled, 'Break away there!' and—But I am digressing. In the language of the poet:

"'No interim, not a minute's vacancy,
Both day and night did we keep company.'"

"After making sure that Sally was not at the station, I jumped in a bus and went to the Antarctic House, a nice cool hotel that soon chilled my temper. Then I sent the flowers with my card to Sally's room, and hurried to my own, previously engaged. Soon afterward a maid knocked at the door and handed me the roses, saying, 'Miss Waters is at the beach and her door is locked.' I was mad. The flowers looked as tired as I felt. I stuck them into the wash-bowl and went to the beach for a bath on my own account. Bathing appeared to be in the ascendant. Some sparrows were even bathing in a mud-puddle in the street.

"On my walk I took up the thread of meditation. Sally had been faultlessly regular and constant in her correspondence with me, so sentimentally gushing, so exceedingly anxious to see me, so astonishingly emphatic and explicit in her underlined directions to me both to write and to wire her in advance the day, hour and train I should arrive on, that I was now completely at a loss to know how to interpret her sudden indifference. It looked to my mind about the color and temperature of chocolate ice-cream—very dark and cold. She had not promised to meet me in so many words, or open arms, but certainly she had implied as much.

"O most delicate fiend!
Who is't can read a woman?"

"Upon arriving at the beach I soon attired myself for a swim. Treading water ankle deep, I watched young women wallow in the sand, looking more like mud-hens than the pretty girls some of them were, and saw a motley collection of mankind doing likewise, imitating the burrowing instincts of ground-hogs, and beheld an officious policeman arrest two amateur naturalists in the act of

photographing a fresh and pretty water-nymph who was standing in brine less shallow than her bathing costume and then inwardly encored a courageous man, undetected, photographing the whole group, cop, nymph and two 'Dromios,' until I completely forgot whom I was looking for.

"Then the curtain fell, and the next act opened with my swimming down-shore and back with a watch out. Not a sign of Sally Waters anywhere. This was depressing. I dragged my heavy frame high on to the beach, and made myself president of a little sand-bank, and presently overheard two impudent fellows discussing the charms of the seaside belle, my Sally.

" 'There she is now,' said one. 'The reckless angel will go too far some fine day, and kick the bucket in mid-ocean.'

"I trained my optics seaward and discerned a straw hat bobbing on the waves about an eighth of a mile out.

" 'Does that hat belong to Miss Waters?' I inquired of one of the fellows, who was slyly cashing a draught of whiskey in front of my bank.

" 'It's hers,' said he, 'unless she borrowed it. Now her fellow's gone back to the city, she's up to her old dare-devil tricks again.'

" 'What fellow,' I queried.

" 'Why, the New York chap with elephant ears and sheeny nose, who left this morning and made her get up before breakfast.'

"That was enough for me. The flies bothered me some, but I shifted the scene and, dashing into the surf, tried to pickle my jealousy in brine. At that moment loud shouting attracted my notice landward. Bathers on shore were leaping to their feet, and their eyes were turned toward the ocean. As I arose on the crest of a wave I de-

tected the straw hat waving wildly. It told at a glance that Sally had a cramp; had it been in New York, I should have said it was a 'shark pulling her leg.' My first impulse was to save her life.

"I shrieked at the top of my voice, 'She's drowning! Launch a boat!'

"What a fiendish passion is jealousy! I hesitated a moment, undecided what to do, and invoked loudly my patron saint to the wind and waves:

" 'So I'll die
For thee, O Imogen, even for whom my life
Is every breath, a death: and thus, unknown,
Myself I'll dedicate. Let me make men know
More valour in me than my habits show.'

"Then I struck out boldly over the billows, reserving my breath and strength for the return to shore. The hysterical screams and shouts from the beach stimulated my power and courage. While swimming on my side I discerned throngs of landlubbers swarming on the strand. Apparently all Rasbury and the Jersey coast had been summoned by telephone and fire-bells.

"A stiff breeze blew from the sea and the waves were high, but the nearer and the nearer and the more rapidly I approached the struggling girl, the more vigor I seemed to possess. I always had been a fine swimmer, my muscles were hard and enduring, and I was a good all-around athlete; but supporting one body is quite a different thing from supporting two—just what my governor said when I announced my engagement. I found it a hard swim. Finally, I got so near Sally that I could hear her hiccup—she was always having hiccoughs—and also detect that she had cramps in both limbs. I did not rest my eyes on her, for I knew she had all she could do to keep her body afloat as it was, but I just spouted and

swam and kicked in my own natural way, till I was startled by a despairing call from her, 'Help! Heaven save me!'

"Whew! How that pitiful voice pierced my heart. 'God save her!' I breathed to Heaven, and called loudly, 'Hold on!' 'Hold on to what, y' idiot!' she answered. Her insolent reply dampened my ardor for a moment,—not that I was dry by any means,—but I attributed it to cramps and took a fresh spurt. I recalled to mind the words:

"'Oaths are straws, men's faiths are wafer-cakes,'

and called aloud to Sally:

"'And hold fast is the only dog, my duck;'

but I got no response.

"One more stroke and I should have her. But alas! a huge wave swept over our heads, and I dreamed of Jules Verre. Luckily, however, we rose simultaneously to the surface. At once I made a grab for her hair, endeavoring to avoid being hugged—which struck me as being very absurd—and buried my fingers in the meshes of that hirsute trophy of hers, and then with my strong dexter arm struck out boldly for the shore. The wind and waves were now in my favor. The great swells banked on me,—about the first thing that ever did,—pushing me onward rapidly. I soon got used to the 'roll,' but the scene was more tragic than I usually played in. Even in those days I preferred comedy. I was so frightened that I didn't look around once, but watched the stage manager on the shore. I felt that Sally had swooned, or strangled, or else had cramps in her jaws, for she was as silent as a fog-horn in clear weather. For me to try and keep her head out of water was out of the question. It struck me that there was something peculiarly expressive

in the name 'Waters,' and I concluded that if she wasn't saturated enough with it now to want to change it, she probably never would be.

"We were nearing shore. She would soon be resuscitated, and I should win bride, honor and glory. Hope kept my spirits buoyant, but my physical strength began to fail me. Only a superhuman power propelled my legs and right arm. To go down to history as a hero did not seem just recompense for going down to the bottom as a drowned man, and it would be an insult to Victory, I thought, to go down right before her face. Visions of public ovations greater than board-walk prayer-meetings, life-saving medals, newspaper eulogy and countless demonstrations in honor of my heroism filled my brain till it felt like a fish-line bobber: it just managed to keep afloat.

"Then I heard shouts of 'Bravo!' a rod ahead, and I was at once transformed into a modern Leander of Herculean power. What an incomparable claim I expected now to have upon the heart and hair of Sally Waters!

"Another stroke and we should be saved. A revival meeting of less than a million souls were assembled on the beach to welcome the survival. 'The sea is a drama,' I thought, 'and all the shore a stage.'

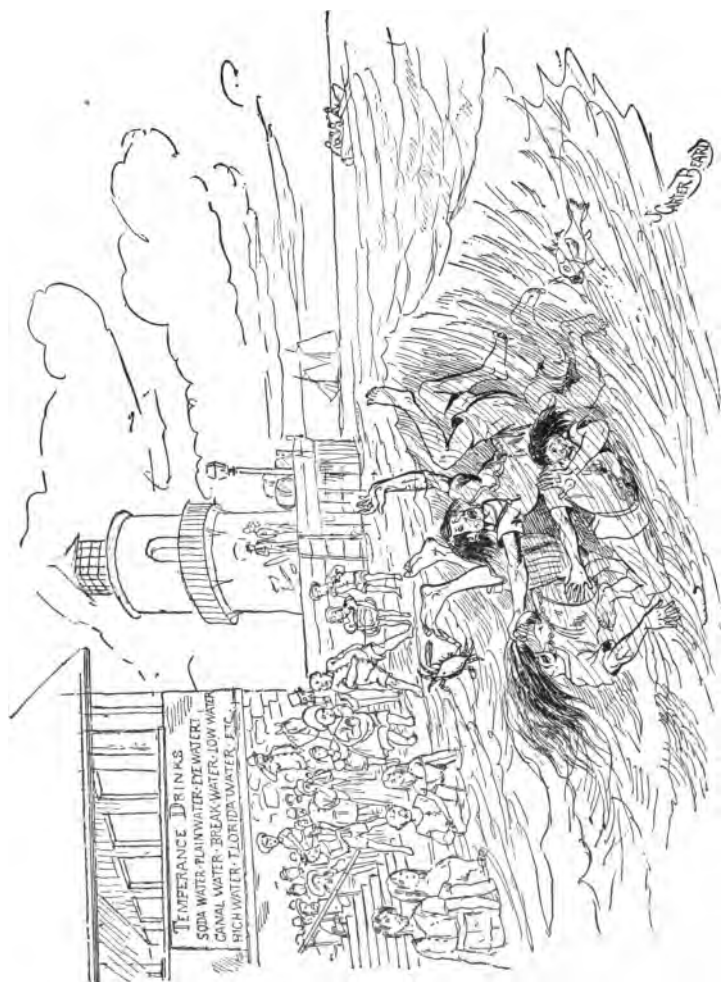
"A squad of male bathers plunged into the surf to receive us. Then a mountain wave lifted me off my feet and slammed me violently on to the shoulders of the committee who advanced to cancel the floating debt. And, as I started a series of somersaults, I struck the chairman full in the face with the remains of my poor Sally—a very heavy switch of hair. Heaven and earth! where was the rest of her? Had I scalped her? Somebody helped me upon my feet, but I endeavored to drown in a foot of water. Did man ever feel such remorse? To think I had risked my life to save a switch of false hair! And Sally,

poor girl, cold and stiff, lying down underneath the cruel, dark-green ocean like a lump of amber, perhaps some day to smoke—God have mercy on her soul!

"This and a thousand other thoughts crowded into my brain. Faint from exhaustion, sorrow, excitement and remorse, I swooned into a pair of arms singularly masculine, and was borne to the pier. And there while restoratives were vainly sought for I lay unconscious, gazed upon curiously by an inquisitive throng, as though I might be some piscatorial monster fished up from the deep.

"Meanwhile, it seems, as I afterward learned, the prim and orderly resort was shocking the gods with a benefit performance, consisting of a ballet-dance and a circus combined.

"While I was busy rescuing her switch, a life-boat was saving Sally. The Park was transformed into a Bedlam. Hundreds of bathers danced the ballet through the streets, calling for whiskey, rum, brandy and beer; hysterical women rushed from house to house, screaming for smelling-salts; men yelled into hotel corridors for doctors and veterinary surgeons, the latter to treat me, the ass, no doubt; boys rolled barrels through the streets as if I were elected; and a multitude of voices howled and screeched, 'The belle of Rasbury is drowned!' You who believe in a happy *medium* must not be shocked when I say that no *spirits* were to be found. 'Jersey lightning' was prohibited by law from striking in that spot. And it was said that one of the pioneers of the town even emptied his vinegar-jug on Saturday night so that its mother couldn't work on Sunday. One woman was arrested by a policeman and handcuffed for being caught with a bottle of methylated spirits used for hair-curling; a youth with a camphor bottle was seized by a cop because he couldn't show a doctor's permit for the alcohol in it. Everybody



"THE SEA IS A DRAMA, . . . AND ALL THE SHORE A STAGE."

was in a frenzied plight. Even the dogs succumbed to the maddening excitement, and went into hydrophobia and the dog-pound.

"But Sally was getting on swimmingly. She finally reached shore, and was carried to the board walk, where she was rolled on a barrel until she was as soft as a squeezed lemon.

"Then she was taken to a bath-house, where a dozen women worked over her. Some rubbed her joints with salad dressing, some shook hands with her, others shook her feet, soda water was forced down her throat with a fire-hose, but all this was of no avail. Just as the attendants began to lose heart an old salt was brought in in an inebriated condition, and induced to breathe in Sally's face. She opened her eyes instantly. Her muscles moved, her lips quivered, and she stammered, 'Mo-more whiskey!' But lo! her request came too late. The fisherman, who was as thoroughly 'soaked' as Sally, was seized by the secret police and cast into prison. Then she pressed her hand to her head, and shrieked, and would have fainted, when a girl standing by thrust the dripping tresses before her eyes. But this only resulted in a double shock. What a revelation it must have been! The hair was of a bright terra-cotta red; the style had suddenly changed and the dye had soaked off. Sally had always worn a straw hat while bathing to keep off the spray. She was too expert a swimmer to wet it otherwise. But to return to myself.

"I awoke from my faint solitary and alone, inhaling flies and regrets with every breath, and vainly wishing that I had the superhuman power to walk off the pier and drown. Oblivious of the fact that Sally had been saved, I was paralyzed with surprise, you may imagine, when, detecting the sound of cheers on the beach, I

glanced below and saw Sally Waters, or her ghost, white and limp, approaching me, supported by two other girls. I dared not believe my eyes. The shock brought me to a sitting posture. I simply marvelled:

“ ‘Am I in earth, in heaven, or in hell?
Sleeping or waking, mad or—’

“Well, her long discolored hair fell down over her shoulders.

“She saw me. And her eyes looked a whole set of encyclopædias. When she was a rod away she dismissed her props, and opened her jaws, which had recovered from their cramp.

“ ‘Madman! idiot! half-witted fool! loathsome monster! You almost saved my life,’ she vociferated.

“ ‘There needs no ghost, my (lady) come from the grave to tell us this,’ I said tragically, and I stammered in gasps:

“ ‘I-I almost l-l-l-ost my own life t-t-t-to save your *hair!*’ Then, after a momentary pause, during which we glared at one another like panthers, I added:

“ ‘I see you what you are: you are too proud;
But, if you were the devil, you are fair.
My lord and master loves you; O, such love
Could but be recompens’d though you were crowned
The nonpareil of beauty.’

“She did not like my part, and she replied:

“ ‘I think thou art an ass,’ as pure as Shakespeare.

“ ‘I thought,’ said I, ‘your hair was your own; you told me so, and I believed you.’

“Her eyes flashed, her body trembled, her lips opened, her patriotic cheeks grew alternately red, white and blue, and I was expecting another anatomical eruption when

she softly said, 'You have no reason for not believing me still. I told you the truth. This hair is all my own. I know, for I bought it with my own money.'

"Well, friends, I had nothing more to say. But, I thought as she turned and left me:

" 'Thank God I were my state far worser than it is,
I would not wed her for a mine of gold.'

"Within twenty-four hours the news of my exploit had apparently penetrated every clime from Sitka to Madagascar and Hoboken to Hong-Kong. Theatrical managers from London, San Francisco, Vienna and Pekin telegraphed for me. I failed to get the life-saving medals, and my only glory was Billy McGlory, who offered me \$50.00 a week to pose as a freak in his saloon.

"As badly as I needed money, I declined all offers, and as soon as I had recovered sufficient strength I escaped to Philadelphia, where I buried myself for a week. There I made a solemn vow never again to attempt to rescue a drowning woman until I should be able to distinguish in a sudden emergency which is woman and 'which is switch.'"

"That was a damp, poor story," said the ecclesiast, who had not felt complimented by the comedian's nap during his own thrilling narrative.

"Whew!" ejaculated the down-easter, shocked at the Preacher's expression, "how he swears! Folks what live in stone houses needn't throw glass. I agree with yer, though: 'twuz a d— poor story, no gettin' round it."

"Pardon," interrupted the Preacher, with much gravity, "but you misunderstood my words. I said it was a *damp*, poor story."

"Yer a slick one," chuckled the Don. "If I wuz yer an' yer mouth wuz mine, I'd wash it out with soap-suds."

"Speaking of soap-suds," interrupted the Poet Laureate, desiring to preserve the peace of the community, "perhaps you might be interested to hear my first poetic production. It was written at the early age of ten, and inspired by the winning grace of a maiden four years older than myself. She was so neat and clean that her mother called her 'Soap-elia.'"

CHAPTER XXI.

LINES TO SOAP-ELIA.

A POEM BY THE POET LAUREATE.

- “IN this picturesque valley, with mountains around me,
Their towering peaks all rocky and bare,
Where once roamed the Injin, a day's ride hath found me,
Exiled from the world, the girls and all care.
- “Aurora, with kisses all frescoed with dewdrops,
Comes in thro' my window and smoothes down my pate;
And I dream of the maid that I late took to two hops,
Her pliable waist and her rheumatic gait.
- “We hand in hand walk to the meadow together,
And shoo to their folds the cattle and swine;
And after we milk them and smooth down their leather,
We feed to the chickens stones, corn-cobs and twine.
- “My feet are still sore where the young chickens roosted
And ate all the corn that tight shoes had grown;
My pants are in shreds where the brindled cow boosted
Me into the tree where the turkeys had flown.
- “Yet sweet is the bliss of these beautiful mountains,
The brook's low murmur, the frog's gentle croak,
The tree-toad's palaver, the spring's giggling fountain,
Where bluejays and centipedes carol and joke.
- “I cannot forget where the honey-bees sat on me—
Tied round my wrist is a bandage with salve;
My mustache now torn from its roots won't adorn me,
For while I did sleep it was licked by a 'calve.'

“Still I am content with these frolicsome neighbors,
Which ever console me in days dull and drear;
I shall still awhile sip of their sweet, spicy flavors,
Ere life lose its nectar and Death drink his bier.”

“You don’t mean you composed those verses at the age of ten?” questioned the Lawyer, who seemed to have discovered a “deadly parallel” between the Poet’s early display of genius and his own abnormal memory.

“Only ten years.”

“Ten months,” I should say, said Hero.

“Ten months!” gasped the dumbfounded bard.

“Yes, ten months at hard labor for committing such a heinous offense against the liberty of poetic license.”

Had these reflections upon the Poet’s talents been made under some other circumstances, they might have been followed by missiles ranging from a Cupid’s arrow to a locomotive.

The Don took the part of the slighted one. Said he, “Folks allus make fun of Pote Lariets.”

“It largely depends who they are,” remarked the Professor.

“How long have you suffered from these temporary aberrations of mind?” inquired the Doctor.

“Ever since I was a lad of five. Why, I was a critic at seven, and so deeply did I apply myself that I narrowly escaped asphyxiation.”

“Indeed!” “Of whose composition?” “The rhyme or the sense?” chimed three voices facetiously.

“Neither; it was the gas-metre—down-cellar.”

The chair of the heavy Drummer was heard shaking violently; its occupant was glad that he had had no voice in the entertaining debate. Soon he broke the silence.

“Quite as distressing a malady,” said he, “as that which brought an acquaintance of mine to a premature

grave. He was treated by the most noted specialists of the world, but none could help him."

"Did he ever try a water-cure?" ventured the Wall Street man, who held stock in one.

"Yes, at the last moment. It was the stream from a fire-engine hose. It killed him. Most phenomenal case. Puzzled all the doctors."

"Relate the story," said the physician.

CHAPTER XXII.

THE FAKIR AND THE TAPE-MEASURE.

A STORY BY THE DRUMMER.

"I HAD a very intimate friend once who was the most prodigal of prodigal sons. He had money to burn, that is, money burned in his pocket. One day he was attracted to an auctioneer's counter, from which he departed a few moments later with a handsome gold watch. It was an exceptional bargain, costing the small sum of \$5.00, and was 'warranted,' which meant, literally, guaranteed to run when he ran, and the gold case to be washed with water in which gold-fish had swum.

"In time, my friend began to mortgage his future earnings in order to patronize various companies of the installment plan. His second watch was purchased by \$1.00 weekly payments, and, when seventy-five weeks had dragged by at a turtle's pace and he owned the watch, it was so tired from being *liened* on a year and a half that it committed suicide by falling overboard in the bay while he was fishing. Thus doth remorse seize upon the works of art as well as upon the works of the devil.

"My friend's spendthrift malady increased in seriousness until it assumed disastrous proportions. He continued to buy everything he saw on sale, at any and all times and places—as long as his money held out. His room was a veritable toy-shop. His family thought him crazy. He was, however, conscious of his singular weakness, and after much thought and calculation, decided that he could save money by employing a companion at

\$75.00 a month to take full charge of him and check his ruinous propensities. By this method he saved money and, at the end of a year, thought his disease so completely cured that he would discharge his guardian and trust himself out alone.

"Next morning he sauntered down Broadway to his office. He managed on the way to resist the appeals of a dozen or more fakirs, when all at once he felt a vague premonition that his old malady still lingered in his system and was striving hard for ascendancy over the better elements of his nature. At length he was accosted by a fakir of singular vigor and magnetism who was crying 'Tape-measures.' His eyes fell recklessly into the basket of wares, so attractive in price and design; then, suddenly, his legs refused to ambulate. His body trembled, and he felt himself gradually yielding to the influences of his malady and the magnetism of the fakir. The latter instantly and with characteristic enthusiasm pulled out a yard of tape from a little, round, yellow case, and measuring the distance between himself and my friend, allowed the tape to fly back into its coil; and he repeated the operation several times, while pouring into my friend's ears the following words, with the velocity and awful earnestness of an electric current:

"'Exactly two feet twelve inches the handiest thing in the world an open and shut game measures anything from a Cleopatra's needle to the thread of an orator's discourse the period between the day a bill is due and its time for payment the distance sunshine travels to the depths of a bankrupt's despair my dear sir nobody of sound mind should be without one a single day only a few left the world's demand increasing and the supply limited will measure a foot' (lifts his boot in friend's face) 'or a yard with a house on it always handy can be

carried in vest pocket all wood can't rust by chemical preparation won't burn tape pure linen stand all climates in this world or the next will measure round or square though square measures are always preferred stands water to perfection will measure the temperature of the air or the humidity of a well simply press the button and the lead drops to the bottom touch the lever and the tape coils back put a hook on it with a piece of red flannel and it will exterminate frogs from a cistern sling the lead round the legs of a kicking mule and you can measure its reach with absolute safety correct measure indicated by automatic button ' (he throws the tape round friend's right leg) 'exactly $24\frac{1}{2}$ inches a good leg not easily pulled the greatest simplest most wonderful invention of the age measures your neck for a collar or head for a hat with automatic allowance for a night off all this elegant beautiful magnificent useful marvelous entertaining delightful valuable priceless article can be had for the sum of only ten cents a tenth of a dollar the price of two beers or a good cigar think of it mister think of it if you let this golden opportunity pass you will dream of it by night and regret it by day and when you're about to die you will ask for it to measure the time you have to live and how—'

" But just then the strain upon the poor fakir's system was so great that he collapsed in a dead faint, falling into the gutter. He struck his head upon the curbstone, and was killed almost instantly. An ambulance arrived soon after. Fortunately, a policeman was standing by at the time, watching the extraordinary conflict between the fakir's persistence and my friend's resistance, and though my friend felt himself absolutely a murderer he was not arrested. When the ambulance surgeon asked him for particulars, and especially for the distance the

fakir fell, an irresistible impulse caused him to seize a tape-measure and ascertain the fakir's length. 'Five feet ten inches,' he said, and then, conscious of the true handiness of the article, he dropped a dime into the fakir's money-box, and departed with a burning conscience in the direction of his office.

"He had not proceeded four blocks, however, before he began to feel an irresistible temptation to measure something. The more deeply he thought the more rapidly he walked, and the longer grew his strides, until a distressing perspiration broke out upon him. Suddenly he stopped short, drew forth the tape-measure, and knelt down to measure his stride, while a vast throng of pedestrians, attracted by the unusual performance, quickly assembled to satisfy their curiosity. You are likely aware, my friends, that it requires but little to block the pavement on Broadway. 'Three feet two inches,' he said aloud, and hastened on through the dividing crowd, which followed after him in a volume resembling a flood of water from a burst dam. Before he had walked another block, my friend's observing eye surveyed a tall building on the block below, which cast its shadow at his feet. He at once asked himself how tall the building might be, and then that dominating disease impelled him to stop and measure the height of the building. First he measured the height of a figure-A advertising-sign on the curb, then its shadow, and after that, with great difficulty and at great risk of being trampled underfoot by the passing teams, he completed the measurement of the building's shadow which extended diagonally across the busy street. The multitude that gathered and lined the curbs on either side gaped and feasted their eyes in astonishment, and, after my friend had solved his problem in proportion and ascertained the height of the

building, followed him on down-town. His late achievement gratified him beyond measure. He hadn't felt so happy in many a day.

"On the block below he came to another stop, and although he had a wardrobe more than complete, that prodigal disease guided him by the nose into a tailor's shop to be measured for a suit of clothes. If he had attempted to resist that uncontrollable desire, it might have killed him. He did not select the cloth, that didn't matter. He stepped upon the block and motioned to the cutter. The latter proceeded to measure him with his own tape-measure, but my friend interfered. 'Use my tape-measure,' said he, 'the best and most accurate made.' 'I prefer my own,' said the tailor. 'My measure, or no clothes,' replied my friend. The tailor yielded.

"When my friend entered the door of the building containing his office, he collided with a stranger who was coming out, and stopped to measure the width of the doorway, and would have measured the stranger for a coffin, but he was gone. Among the other things which he measured, or attempted to measure, that week were the thickness of tissue-paper, the length of his windpipe (he dropped in the tape and nearly strangled to death), the weight of a dray-horse which stepped on his foot (the measure failing, he calculated 10,000 tons' displacement), the growth of his mustache in twenty-four hours, the density of smoke when his lamp exploded, and lastly, the width of the stream of water at the nozzle of a fire-hose which played upon his burning house. In the last instance, he was knocked senseless and carried into a neighbor's house, apparently dead. As soon as the doctor succeeded in bringing him to, he called for his tape-measure, and although he was in a critical condition,

he endeavored during a brief respite in the physician's vigil to measure the height of the sofa, and fell off on to the floor insensible.

"An affrighted relative entered the room and inquired how long he had been unconscious, when instantly he came to, and raising his tape-measure, said, 'I'll tell you exactly.' But the shock from the fire-hose had been too great, and he only survived it three days. The day following his demise a newspaper containing his obituary was brought into the room, and a mourner remarked aloud, 'Very flattering indeed—much more praise than the whole amount published in his life;' and at once my friend opened his eyes. The mourners looked ready to faint, but when he gasped the words 'Hand me my tape-measure, and I will measure the article,' everybody fled from the room but the cook, who was accustomed to wakes. 'Twenty inches,' he said, in hollow tones, 'ten inches more praise than I ever received during my life.' Then he again expired. He remained *composed* for a day, after which he was laid in his coffin with tape-measure in hand. The hour for the imposing funeral ceremony finally arrived, and the pastor proceeded with the burial-service. Tears flowed freely from the 'be-doozled' eyes of the grief-stricken household and friends, and the affected preacher was saying, 'Judge not, that ye be not judged, for with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged; and with what measure'—when instantly there sounded a supernatural moan, and my friend arose, and thrust his head through the plate-glass lid of the coffin, and exclaimed mechanically, 'Use my measure;' then he fell back dead. But—"

"See here, mister man," interrupted the Lawyer, "wind up that tape-measure or you will set us all as crazy as your friend."

"I am almost through," the Drummer replied, and resumed:

"The solemn ceremony over, the funeral procession wheeled slowly to the cemetery, and the host of hypocrites paraded in their masks of grief with great effect. But just as the coffin was being lowered into the grave, the undertaker turned to the grave-digger and said, 'The grave doesn't look six feet deep; did you measure it?' Those words appalled my friend. He groaned in pain, and knocked upon the coffin so violently that the frightened pall-bearers let go the ribbons. The coffin fell, inflicting a severe shock to his system, and causing him to be more alive than ever. The coffin was then raised and opened, and my friend sat up in his shroud, frightening the assemblage half to death. Said he, 'Take this tape-measure and tell me honestly the exact depth of my grave.'

"'Five feet and seven inches,' said the grave-digger, nervously, 'the best we can do for you this winter.' But my friend was obstinate about dying again until it was decided he should rest in the public vault till spring. Then he lay down and resumed unconsciousness. Meanwhile consultation had taken place by the family, the physician and the pastor, and it was decided that my friend's death could not be relied upon; and that a grave error having been committed, every precaution must be taken against burying him alive. The doctor argued it was only the nerves that were alive, as in the case of a decapitated fowl; the pastor claimed it was simply the soul that spoke; and both insisted that, for all purposes, my friend was as dead as a door-nail. His mother, however, arranged to have an automatic apparatus attached to his coffin, which would notify the cemetery-keeper by a bell, should he again come to life, and caused

an air-hole to be made in the coffin to enable him to breathe.

"A week had not passed, however, before he came to life again, forced himself from his coffin, and in the darkness of evening walked to his earthly home. The pastor at the time was paying the grief-stricken family a parochial visit. He and everybody were horror-stricken when my friend appeared in the doorway, looking more like an apparition than a real being in flesh and blood.

"'O God!' exclaimed the pastor. Then he added, believing himself demented, 'Joe Dooms, is that you or your ghost?'

"'I am,' was the equivocal reply. 'Don't be frightened, I only want a word with you.' The quaking preacher lost all power over himself, and, while the family were still trembling, my friend took him into the library and said to him, 'I want your advice upon a little difficulty which concerns my future on the other side of the river. When I reached the gate of Paradise I was stopped by an angel sentinel, who informed me that the gate was too narrow to admit me. Fortunately, I had my tape-measure in my hand, and proceeded at once to measure my own dimensions and the gateway. It was here that I discovered that the difficulty lay in the region of the heart, which revealed an abnormal swelling of the conscience. The sentinel attested to my findings, and hinted that a few confessions to my earthly pastor might have relieved me of the difficulty.'

"The pastor was as white as a sheet, but presently found utterance.

"'It is a wise man,' said he, 'who listens to the advice of his superiors.'

"'Exactly,' replied my friend. 'I have come back here to confess to you and repent. I am the murderer



“I PROCEEDED TO MEASURE THE GATEWAY.”

of the fakir. He was determined to sell me a tape-measure, but I was equally determined he should not, and resisted till he fell dead. I am very sorry I was so obdurate. I should have yielded to the temptation. There appears to be a conflict between the moral principles designed for the earth and the spiritual requirements for admission to Paradise. If I had my life to live over again, I should be more pliable and easily influenced, and should treat with greater charity and kindness the wants and pleasures of others, even to the denial of my own prosperity and comfort.'

"The pastor then blessed my friend, and attempted to shake hands with him, but he had vanished.

"His ten-minutes' furlough was up. His parting words were, 'If you do not see me back again, just take it for granted that either I squeezed through the gate, or found a wider opening.'

"This preacher, with whom I was quite intimate, confided to me that spiritual interview, and said that as he hadn't seen my friend since, he concluded he got through the gate. But—"

"Come, come, my sacrilegious brother!" interposed the Preacher, "that story is shockingly improper, and contains not a grain of sense or moral."

"Quite to the contrary," persisted the Drummer. "The moral is—buy all the rubbish that is peddled in the market, let nothing restrain your temptation to buy. If persuasive fakirs assail your pocket against your will, knock them down and escape. Do not remain obstinate until they die of nervous prostration. They will recover from your act of violence, and you will have escaped with a clear conscience."

"In one particular alone," observed the ecclesiast, "can I see the slightest semblance of a moral in your

extravagant story. By not restraining his propensities your friend shortened his life. Of course, the longer a man lives in this world, of so much more time is he cheated in the happier world to come."

"Which mathematically cannot be disputed," said the Professor, "but I should be only too happy to escape alive from this snow habitation to civilization, even by the subtraction of a few years from eternity."

"But," resumed the incorrigible Drummer, "there comes the hitch; one is never sure of the future, as demonstrated in the case of my unlucky friend. To be brief, the night he confessed to his pastor his spirit later appeared to the latter and said, 'I found a wider opening, Domine, and went through dead easy; but I made a terrible mistake. Whenever you come my way, I warn you never to put reliance upon a tape-measure; but fetch, by all means, a *thermometer*. The angel sentinel inadvertently directed me to the wrong gate, and I was so deeply absorbed in measuring it that I failed to note the temperature. I am having a devil of a time.'"

The Drummer's story acted like a wet-blanket upon the spirits of those who had already finished the contest in furnishing the most extravagant narrative of an actual experience or observation, and somewhat discouraged the aspirations of the other contestants. None was more interested and astonished than the Doctor.

"I admit," said he, "that the case is without a parallel. Although the director of a sanitarium, I am now more than ever opposed to water-cures, and, on the other hand, equally emphatic in my belief in medicine and ample doses of it. I am only now returning from a visit to a famous Greenwood Cemetery trust society where—"

"Made a deposit, I suppose," interrupted the comedian, facetiously.

"A patient departed this life—"

"To balance her account?" suggested the banker, with equal levity.

"A crabbed old spinster who came to the water-cure and would—"

"I hope her sins wuz washed away," remarked the Don, catching the humorous infection.

"Who ignored my most strenuous persuasions and the admonitions of her dearest friends by obstinately refusing medicine in any form. Her eccentricity extended so far that, although I myself was a descendant of the great Jenner, she would not allow me to even vaccinate her."

"Your professional name?" interrogated the Wall Street man. "I don't believe you mentioned it."

"Johan Grodsensky Eulenburg Nothnagel Canstatt Nervenkrankheiten Jenner Herzbewegung."

"Whew! what a name!" exclaimed the Don.

"No wonder when he chose his profession he had it doc-ed," said the comedian, who immediately after dodged a flying coffee-pot.

"No, I had a much better reason, I assure you."

CHAPTER XXIII.

AN UNPROFESSIONAL NURSE.

A STORY BY THE DOCTOR.

"As in the case of our friend, the broker," began the Doctor, "I was led to engage in my present profession by a mascot, but after I had been drumming some five years on the road. The incident happened about fifteen years ago. I left New York for Chicago on the P.M. train, *via* the New York Central, and looked forward to a pleasant journey. I had not, however, traveled far beyond Yonkers, when, glancing up from the interesting novel I was reading, I beheld a most enchanting vision of feminine loveliness in the section across the aisle. The lady appeared to be about twenty-three. She was attired in mourning, but as she had already removed her bonnet, I could not tell whether she was a widow or not."

"Give me thy hand:

And let me see thee in thy woman's weeds,"

quoted the comedian from his cot.

"Of course," proceeded the Doctor, not noticing the actor's interruption, "the charming heroine in my book at once had a formidable rival. As often as I could admire the beautiful passenger without her detecting me, I did so, feasting my eyes blissfully; but it was not long before I discovered in the mirror of my section a cast in my optics, due to my keeping one eye on the passenger and the other on the heroine of the story.

So I closed my book. Just then an infantile voice sounded in the extremity of the car, and I saw an elderly lady approaching with a squalling infant. To my surprise, she transferred the charge to the 'lovely vision,' who, I noticed, received it reluctantly.

"My prospects for a pleasant journey appeared suddenly to be blasted. My countenance darkened with an expressive frown which the mother detected, and answered with a flash of lightning from her dark eyes that struck me to the heart. 'My goose is cooked,' I thought.

"The mother-in-law, as I made her out to be, sat opposite the presumable mother and child, calmly watching canal-boats on the Hudson, while the mother put the 'howling brat' through a term of gymnasium exercise in probing swaddling-bands for the pin which might be causing the spasms.

"Whenever a young babe flies into spasms, I believe it is a pin that is first accused of being the cause. But this is not the point I am getting at. I left my seat and spent an hour in the smoker, meanwhile pitying the 'lovely vision' for her domestic troubles, and hoping they might soon be allayed. Upon my return I found the child screeching like an enraged panther, and the poor mother trotting it on her knee in a most frightful manner. The passengers frowned, and moved uneasily in their seats, and stuck their fingers in their ears—all showed that they were unnerved, except me; I was boiling with indignation within, but preserved externally an air of composure which soon set everybody wondering and staring.

"Now, I had, on certain occasions in the past, quieted crying babes, and my strong natural fondness for children enabled me to better understand them and

interpret their feelings. Whether this particular child had the colic, or was hungry, or was still being punctured by a pin, of course I could form no conclusion, but cease its squalling it must, and at once, or I should go crazy. I believed I could quiet it and I lacked not the nerve to volunteer the achievement. Addressing the mother politely, I said, 'If you will permit me, madam, I believe I can quiet the child.' Without hesitancy, or a word of objection, she handed me the 'animate nuisance,' and I proceeded to walk the car with it. In less than two minutes the brat stopped its howling, and began to sputter and coo and drum upon my cheek with its fists in a manner to bring joy to my heart and expressions of gratitude to the eyes and lips of my fellow passengers, some of which I overheard.

"The agonized face of the young mother soon resumed its primitive sweetness, and I returned to her the babe. And at once that spunky brat burst forth into another terrible crying spell, which far eclipsed the former one both in pitch and in volume.

"The mother eyed me appealingly, and I resumed the office of nurse, to the obvious amusement of all.

"The dual impulse which prompted me to undertake the stilling of this tempest—the pleasant acquaintance-ship of the presumable widow and the comfort of myself and fellow passengers—appeared to have resulted in a curse to my existence. I soon quieted the infant, however, and in half an hour or so it fell asleep. I then transferred it to its mother, and lit out for the smoker for a breathing spell.

"There, while enjoying my favorite weed, and congratulating myself upon my achievement and the prospects of pleasant company thence onward, I overheard a

gentleman say that his wife and babe were traveling with him. I assumed, of course, that he was the missing father, and that the babe must have had a fit of colic which in all probability would prolong the marital separation the greater part of the day.

"Then, after another half-hour's reverie, I went into the dining-car for lunch.

"The tables were well patronized. I sat alone dreaming of the handsome passenger and her abominable offspring, when, suddenly, the 'lovely vision' entered, and with a smile of recognition sat opposite me at my table. As I reflected upon the temperament of a jealous husband, should he find his beautiful wife chatting with me like an old friend, I felt slightly ill at ease; but I considered that she must understand him, and endeavored at once to impress her favorably with the drumming profession.

" 'Would you not prefer to ride forward?' I asked courteously, rising. 'Please take my seat.'

" 'I *am* riding forward,' she said. Apparently I had lost my head. She noticed my chagrin and looked amusedly out of the window. I knew the surest and quickest way to reach a mother's heart was by praising her babe, so I next said, 'Madam, I must say, your child is the dearest, sweetest, prettiest boy of its age I ever have seen.'

" 'She is a girl, not a boy,' was her reply. But this second idiotic break did not stop my flow of adulation; I had decided while in the smoker just what I should say when I got the chance, and it was too late now to alter my programme.

" 'It has such heavenly blue eyes,' I continued, 'a perfect image of its father.' The woman looked very much surprised, and replied, 'But her eyes are not blue,

they are brown, and besides, where, pray, have you ever seen her father?' 'Why,' said I confidently, 'I saw him smoking a little while ago—near alike as two peas.' The mother looked awfully perplexed. 'You are mistaken,' said she, 'my husband has not been smoking; he died a Christian months ago.'

"My face burned with embarrassment. 'And a girl doesn't like to be called *it*,' persisted the more-than-ever-exasperated woman. 'I beg a thousand pardons,' I gasped, 'and please extend my humble apology to the baby when she grows up.' I felt clearly that I had gone mad, and feared lest my charming companion would any moment flee from the table in alarm. But, divining my mental plight, she soon put me at my ease, and before we had finished lunch the widow and I were good friends.

"We returned to our car in the midst of an operatic performance given by that 'precocious' child. It would now render the soothing melody of Rubenstein, then pitch into the maddening flights of Wagner, and, when the voice seemed to have left the earth completely and permanently, it suddenly would return with a gasping, heartrending imitation of Schneider's Band, causing a dozen to flee from the car. The mother-in-law gave up in despair, and the widow took the child and again looked at me appealingly. Then came the crucial test. I hesitated, I glanced at the passengers, I met the mother's gaze, then yielded, and for a long time held that detestable brat in my arms while the mother and mother-in-law snoozed on their pillows. I tried every expedient at hand to put the child to sleep, and was two hours in accomplishing it. Then I fled to the smoker. Heavens! what an outlook for the remainder of my journey.

"Referring to the business letter in my pocket, I found that I could not postpone my appointment in Chicago, otherwise I should have laid over in Syracuse till the next train. I would even have leaped off while the train was in motion, if necessary. We were now some distance beyond Albany. The night was moonlight. How romantic it might have been, but for that bothersome discord in the other car!

"While dreaming thus my reverie was suddenly broken by a hand laid upon my shoulder, and looking up I recognized an elderly gentleman from my car.

" 'I am sent to tell you,' said he, 'that your god-child is in another spasm, and the mother in despair.'

"Delicacy prevents me quoting my reply; it would not look well in print. Of course, I went to the widow's assistance. In ten minutes I again stilled the 'tempest' and began questioning the mother about the child's health and history. She said I must be a mesmerist to display such influence over an irrepressible infant. She believed the child had the colic, and that while I held her she was out of pain. I protested, but suggested that I should at once seek a physician, though it was doubtful one was to be found on the train. To this the widow objected, claiming that only in the direst extremity would she tolerate a physician about. One had killed her husband, as she expressed it, and she hated the profession. Then I asked, if, in case I consulted a doctor, she would allow the child to take his prescriptions. 'Not if I can do without them,' said she, 'but, of course, if the situation were a serious one, I would be duty bound to do so, I suppose.'

"Thunder! what could be more serious than the present plight of babe, mother, myself and the whole car?

"I handed the sleeping brat to its mother, and began



“WHILE THE MOTHER AND MOTHER-IN-LAW SNOOZED.”

a thorough search of the train. Fortunately I found a doctor—the very last man in the last car—when my hopes had sunk into the toes of my boots.

“‘Yes,’ said he, ‘I am a physician, anything serious? sit down, your tongue, please.’ He was already feeling my pulse. ‘It is not I whom I wish to consult you about, but an infant in the forward car,’ I said. ‘The babe and its mother are strangers to me. I attempted to quiet the child, and succeeded; but as soon as it leaves my arms it flies into spasms. The mother calls it colic. I claim it is spunkiness, or some other devilish malady.’

“The doctor had already risen to go with me when I told him to be seated, and explained the widow’s antipathy for doctors, and gave her reasons. He looked surprised and amused, and said he feared he could do me little service, as it was a difficult matter to diagnose a case out of sight and hearing. A sick infant was a conundrum at the best. At this instant the door was opened, and a shrill noise penetrated our ears. The doctor was startled. ‘Run over a hundred cats,’ said he, glancing out of the window. ‘Oh no, only that squalling brat,’ said I. ‘Great Scott!’ he exclaimed, ‘who would have thought it? Surely it can’t have the colic!’

“I told him I could give him all the child’s symptoms, and begged him to do his utmost to help me out of my dilemma. The child had something awful, that was certain. I took the seat beside him.

“‘To begin with,’ said the amiable physician, with visible effort, ‘colic is pain in the intestines, with or without spasm, occurring in seizures of variable duration and at varying intervals—usually without fever or discoverable organic change.’

“ ‘Seems to hit this case exactly,’ said I, ‘only it’s both with *and* without spasm, and there could not possibly be less organic change in a handorgan forever grinding the same old tune.’

“ ‘Well,’ said the doctor, ‘so far, so good. I will now recite as intelligibly as I can the etiology, symptoms, pathology, diagnosis and prognosis of colic, and enable you to draw comparisons between the same and the child’s symptoms as they impressed you.

“ ‘Now, colic attacks both sexes, is very rare after middle life, but affects all ages up to that point, and is especially frequent in infancy. What is the babe?’

“ ‘An infant,’ was my idiotic reply, ‘and this particular case affects all ages in my car.’

“ ‘Indigestion often provokes spasms—babes often swallow buttons, pins, spools of thread, balls of yarn—’

“ ‘That youngster provokes everybody,’ said I, ‘and is busy and noisy enough to have swallowed a sewing-machine.’

“ ‘*Seems* so,’ returned the doctor.

“ ‘Colic may be caused by cold drinks, ice-cream—’

“ ‘Don’t meet this case,’ I interrupted, ‘although the mother does appear to be of a *cold* nature.’

“ ‘Alcoholic excesses are sometimes followed by colic—’

“ ‘Entirely irrelevant to the case,’ said I, ‘though I will admit that the mother primarily did impress me as being exceedingly *spirit-uelle*.’

“ ‘Inflammations of the colon are attended—’

“ ‘No colon!’ I exclaimed; ‘one long period—an interminable Bedlam.’

“ ‘Colic is sometimes due to the ordinary causes of hysteria.’

“ ‘Hysteria is the effect in this instance, everybody in the car will soon be prostrate with it.’

“ ‘An attack due to digestive disturbances may be preceded by such symptoms as anorexia, eructations, nausea and—’

“ ‘I am not a professor of languages,’ I interrupted kindly; ‘please confine yourself to American Indian. I feel savage.’

“ ‘The patient usually refers to pain in the neighborhood of the umbilicus, or it may be felt in the hypochondria.’

“ ‘Neither am I up on physical geography,’ said I. ‘I know nothing of the places you mention, but I do know that the pain is to be found in this train. My car is full of it. You are digressing and I am in a hurry.’

“ ‘Colic may be so severe as to cause the patient to writhe and groan, bend his body forward, plunge his fists into the abdomen, or lean forward over the back of a chair, or roll about in agony of torture rarely surpassed in human experience.’

“ ‘My dear doctor, that brat is a born acrobat. I warrant you at this moment it is performing wonderful feats. But right here let me ask, do you charge by the visit, the hour, the day, or the month? I can’t afford a large outlay on this customer.’

“ ‘I usually take into consideration the seriousness of the case and the financial standing of the patient,’ said he. ‘But,’ he added, clutching my arm as I rose to escape, ‘in this instance I shall charge according only to the size of the patient.’

“ I again sat, looked at my watch, and admonished him to be quick, else the brat might expire, or the mother turn lunatic.

“‘In the main,’ said he, ‘the prognosis is favorable. Severe colic may lead, in infants, to intussusception.’

“‘I don’t know where that is,’ said I—‘presume it’s some western asylum—but I fear it will lead a dozen passengers to suicide. That child’s malady ought to be checked at once.’

“‘Then you should see the baggage agent,’ advised the doctor; and he inquired, ‘How does my advice tally with your interpretation of the child’s ailments?’

“‘I am sure it’s got the colic, provided it’s still alive,’ I replied.

“‘The first thing to do then is to stop the pain and spasm.’

“‘That,’ I interrupted, ‘is what I came to consult you about ages ago.’

“‘In cases of moderate severity preparations of mint, anise, gaultheria, aromatic spirit of ammonia, compound spirit of ether, chloric ether—’

“‘Pardon,’ said I, ‘but please write out those prescriptions in proper doses, I want them all. If one fails, the other may take. Proceed.’

“‘For severe attacks,’ said the doctor, scribbling rapidly, ‘quick relief is demanded. Chloroform and ether by the stomach and by inhalation, and morphine hypodermically fulfil the indication best. The morphine should be supplemented by the internal administration of such remedies as chloroform, ether, compound spirit of ether, and by inhalation of anæsthetics, if necessary.’

“‘Everything to be found in medical books is necessary,’ said I. ‘Don’t omit a thing.’

“‘Where there is a tendency to extensive development of gas in the intestines from indigestion,’ resumed the exhaustive physician to my exhausted self, ‘anti-

fermentatives and aids to digestion should be used, as the sulphites—'

" 'Put everything down,' I emphasized.

" 'Easier for me to do that than it will be for the child,' said he,—'and hyposulphites, the salicylates, carbolic acid and the carbolates.'

" 'Get down the right proportions,' said I. 'My reputation depends upon the cure of this infant.'

" 'The preparation of pepsin and pancreatin, and the various stomachics and carminatives. One of the best cathartics is croton-oil in small doses, but too much would turn a child inside out.'

" 'But,' I suggested enthusiastically, 'wouldn't that be a good plan? We could then *see* what ailed the child.'

" 'If the mother does not object,' assented the doctor. 'Enemas of *mistura asafœtida* may relieve flatulence—an excellent measure for children, and if the extremities of the child are cold they must be kept warm by stimulating applications of mustard, capsicum, and similar agents, by hot flannels, a hot bath, or a bottle of hot water.'

" Here I observed the long list of prescriptions, and, fearing lest I should be financially swamped, I inquired of the doctor how much I was indebted to him.

" He replied that he wouldn't charge in this case, as I displayed so much Christian love and charity for others, but that in case the child required his personal attendance, or another consultation, he would have to charge \$25. I begged him to exhaust the case at once, as I didn't wish to bother him again.

" 'Mustard sinapisms and hot turpentine stupes to the abdomen will often relieve colicky pains; where inflammation exists, the incessant contact of a hot

dressing constitutes one of the best measures of treatment.'

" 'I agree with you, doctor,' said I; 'if it were my child I should give it such a dressing that it would burn for a month. I am of the opinion it's more spunkiness than colic that ails the brat, but I mean to exhaust your prescriptions upon it till I kill, or cure.'

" 'Do you know whether the child is predisposed to these attacks?' asked he. 'From all appearances, yes,' I replied. 'Then it will derive benefit from a constant slight effect of belladonna, or the bromides, or both. The treatment is harmless and may be long continued. A few drops of whiskey or brandy, or the compound spirit of ether, well diluted with water, slightly sweetened, may be given, or, these failing to give relief, the camphorated or the deodorized tincture of opium may be resorted to with caution.'

" At this moment we were interrupted by the porter of my car, who rushed in to say I was wanted at once, as the baby was in a terrible fit. I thanked the doctor, motioned him to be seated, seized the long list of prescriptions, and hastened to the relief of the widow to find her in a faint, the brat trumpeting like a baby elephant, the passengers walking up and down the car and tearing their hair and raving like mad. I was about to hurry back to the doctor, or jump off the train, when the mother-in-law threw me the brat. I caught it, unfortunately, and collapsed in my seat. Friends, in ten minutes that phenomenal child was as quiet as a placid lake, but its eyes were bloodshot, its face was the color of red ink, its throat swollen, and its head wet enough to lead one to think at first sight that it had been boiled. I was embarrassed, to say the least. The passengers were at once transported with joy, and one

man was so enraptured that in his delirium he threw his wife's bonnet at me, the flowers on it leading him to think it a bouquet.

"When the train reached Syracuse I explained to the widow, who had since revived, that I must get off the car and telegraph to Rochester. She took the brat, and I fled, pledging myself on oath to return.

"Rushing into the railroad telegraph office, I wired an acquaintance in the Flour City to be at the train with the list of prescriptions which I enumerated, and, directing the operator to divide the message, marked *important*, into five parts, and send each separately and in haste so that the pharmacist might save time in preparing the prescriptions, I gave him postage for mailing the original list to me in Chicago, paid for the telegrams and jumped on the train as it moved away. Needless to say, it was the biggest bill of the kind I ever had to pay, by a large majority.

"But that child did not rest on its laurels. It tried to surpass its reputation. It seemed an age that I suffered martyrdom with the babe on my lap, when just as I was expecting we were nearing San Francisco the conductor called 'Rochester.' My druggist friend met me at the train with a big package, and as he handed it to me he inquired, 'What's the racket, lost your sample-case? Didn't know you had gone into the drug line.'

"'Excuse me,' I said, 'I am not drumming the drug trade, nor have I lost my sample-case. I have, however, almost lost my reason, and as for the racket you inquire about, can't you hear it?'

"'I hear a lot of hogs squealing in the stockyards yonder,' said he.

"'Those are not hogs being butchered that you

hear,' I corrected, 'but a squalling babe in that car. I intend to put it to sleep with these medicines.'

"'God! man!' he gasped, horrified, 'you don't mean—'

"'I do,' I interrupted, hurriedly paying his bill. 'There must be plenty of antidotes in the list; if one harms, the next will cure.'

"He looked aghast, he was speechless. As the train tooted, he explained that he had had time to fill only twenty-five prescriptions—about half the lot, but would send the remainder anywhere I might mention. I named a hot place not in this world, and leaped aboard the car almost paralyzed,—\$19 for telegrams and \$26 for medicines!

"The conductor assisted me into the smoker, where an elderly man met me at the door and, grasping my arm, cried, 'For heaven's sake, man! I've been looking for you! Take your godchild and hang on to it until we reach our destination, and I'll start a subscription for you.'

"'I am not a professional nurse,' I said indignantly; 'besides, that brat is a devilchild, not a godchild.'

"While I was debating and fanning and fuming in a chair, our porter came rushing in crying, 'Say, boss, fo' de Lawd! de kid am got 'em agin bad, an' yo' wife wants yo'.'

"'Stars alive!' I moaned, 'my wife!' She couldn't have said so. The nigger had guessed at it. What a predicament!

"Just as I was mentally debating whether to feed the medicines to the babe, or swallow them myself, and had about decided to do the latter, two old friends, a Chicago and a Cleveland drummer, entered the smoker and greeted me. This was cheering. A happy thought came to me. I told them about the beautiful widow in

my coach—but forgot to mention the brat—dwelt upon the delightful time I had been having in her society, said she was from Chicago, hinted she intended taking a sleeper from Buffalo, and then excused myself and departed. I knew that in less than half an hour they would arrange with the train-conductor to procure them berths in the same sleeping-car with the widow; for those passengers who had heard the babe would certainly not fall over each other in a mad scramble to obtain Wagner-car tickets for that car, but, on the other hand, be more likely to pay a premium to secure berths in advance in one of the two other sleepers.

“Immediately upon my return to the coach, an appealing look from the mother conquered my sympathetic heart, and I walked the car with the screeching brat five minutes before quieting it. ‘Mesmerist,’ ‘Hypnotist,’ remarked the passengers. If I were such, I never knew it before.

“Then, upon reaching Buffalo, I carried the babe into the sleeper while the widow and the mother-in-law followed, sat down, and at once selected a prescription for her to prepare.

“‘What is it?’ she asked.

“‘Don’t know,’ said I, ‘but it doesn’t matter; directions are on it. I have twenty-four others on hand if it doesn’t work—’

“‘Mercy sake!’ she gasped, ready to faint, ‘I want the babe to wake again. These will surely kill it.’

“‘Never!’ I exclaimed. ‘All harmless—and besides, half of them are antidotes for the other half. The doctor who prescribed them is known all the way from New York to Chicago.’

“This seemed to satisfy her, and we soon dosed the brat; but we couldn’t keep the stuff down, and had to

try four other prescriptions before the child began to sleep. Must have been ether or morphine.

"I was, therefore, not a little amused when suddenly my two drummer friends came into the sleeper, and observed a babe in my arms and the handsome widow dozing on a pillow across the aisle.

"A look of sudden intelligence overspread their faces, which plainly emphasized the aphorism 'Misery loves company,' and which inwardly convulsed me. The mother's 'nerve' became aggravating to me, and I laid her babe in her arms and sought my berth. There I breathed to Heaven a prayer of thanksgiving, and was just falling to sleep when, all at once, a cyclone seemed to sweep the car. That irrepressible, anatomical tempest squalled till the car sounded like a slaughter-house. I dreaded what was sure to happen and feigned sleep.

"Soon a well-known voice sounded above the noise of the 'tempest': 'All those in favor of the godfather taking his child to bed with him and giving us a rest signify by saying—*Damn!*'

"Friends, that resolution was carried unanimously with the most diabolical enthusiasm ever displayed at a riot convention.

"What could I do? I might be ejected from the train. Discretion proved to be the better part of valor. Ringing for the porter, I sent for the howling brat, and its mother laid it in my arms. And handing her five prescriptions, I directed her to prepare them. We fed the babe two, and I kept the three for an emergency. Then we rolled the brat in hot flannels, and put a hot water-bag at its feet.

"The medicine seemed to have taken effect, but after a time, not having full confidence in it, nor wishing to be disturbed from sleep, I dosed the brat with the other

three, and rested easily. Of course, the babe squirmed and gagged and kicked considerably, but it finally succumbed to the combination, and we fell asleep together.

"Not long after, I was dreaming of being shipwrecked at sea, floating for several days on a broken spar, and just when about to be swallowed by a whale I awoke, choking with an infantile foot in my mouth, and in an embarrassing condition generally—the cork had come out of the hot water-bag. When I thought of the blissful repose of the mother and the mother-in-law in the section opposite, I was mad. I called across the aisle, 'Madam, your babe is ill!' No answer. 'Your babe is dying!' No reply from her, but several impolite expressions from other quarters made it plain nobody would go into mourning. 'Madam, your babe is dead!' A single voice in the extremity of the car answered, 'Thank God!'

"An idea came to me. I arose and quietly laid the brat in the mother's arms and crawled into my berth again. Next time I was awakened by worse screeches than I had yet heard. 'Practice makes perfect,' I thought. 'The child's throat and lungs are becoming callous.' Some one yelled: 'Shut up!' so forcibly that he fell out of his berth on to the floor; evidently the babe didn't hear him. I then got up, prepared more prescriptions, forced several down that child, and received my charge, I vowed, for the last time. Before long I was asleep with babe in arms, this time dreaming of being in the woods and hugged by a bear, which was gnawing out my heart. I awoke in a cold sweat, and immediately called to the widow for a bottle for the child. Receiving it, I stuck it in my vest-pocket, and put the hose in the brat's mouth, and this time went to sleep not to awake till morning.

"Gentlemen, that was a night I shall never forget. After breakfast I was presented with resolutions as a mark of gratitude and esteem from my fellow travelers, and a committee was appointed to present me with a gift in silver upon reaching the Windy City.

"On arriving in Chicago, the widow handed me her card. Strange to say, her first husband was an early playmate of mine."

"Her first husband?" inquired the Preacher. "Had she married twice?"

"Not up to that time," said the Doctor, "but she has since. That abominable brat has grown to be the most angelic and winsome little lady you could imagine, and I soon grew to love her as dearly as I did my own children. You see my valuable training that night so forcibly impressed me with the marvelous virtues of medicine and the inestimable advantage of being a physician, that I dubbed Medicine to be the noblest of the professions, and resolved to follow it. Upon my return from the Arctic I married the cold widow, and made a specialty of children's diseases. I have never lost a case outside of my immediate family, which is due to the fact that I always tried my prescriptions on my own children first. This has tended to build up an enviable reputation, and to make me improve upon my skill, until now my practice is so extensive that I have five associate physicians to assist me."

"How many children have you left?" inquired Hero.

"None, except the brat," said the Doctor, plaintively; "I have had a dozen."

A dead silence followed.

While the white people were absorbed in the Doctor's

narrative, the darkey, feeling a severe cold was gathering in his head, had obtained from the red-hot stove the only remaining flat-iron and retired with it to his accustomed seat in the corner. It was he who finally broke the silence as he inquired: "Did yo' say, Doctah, dat yo' name is Johan?"

"Certainly, why?"

"Nuthin' important. I jes gwine ter say Johan iz a gal's name. I uster cote a yallar gal by de name o' Johan."

Here the dialogue was suddenly interrupted by the Professor, who claimed that he smelt something scorching.

"Mercy!" exclaimed Hero, "I hope the house is not on fire. What would we do?"

"Smells like wool," remarked the Drummer.

"Shouldn't wondah, ge'l'men, but it am dis niggah's wool w'at's singein'," said the ingenious porter. "I'ze i'onin' m' head wid de flat-iron."

"He's a funny feller, that nigger," was the Don's observation. "I reckon he kin tell a boss story; why not give 'm a chance now?"

"Tell us about that sweetheart, Johan," added Hero.

"I declare," interrupted the distinguished physician, "I am particular what persons take my name, and I don't like to have such free use made of it, especially by the darkies."

"Dat ain't my fault," said the porter, apologetically. "I ax her t' take my name, but she wouldn't hab it, no how."

The darkey was still busy with the flat-iron, and the Doctor, not being over-pleased with his familiarity, thought to "get even," by giving him a fright. "Por-

ter," said he gravely, "that is a very dangerous thing you are doing. Don't you know that the hot iron will melt your brains and that they will escape through your nose and leave you as much an idiot as a certain friend of yours?"

"Fo' de Lawd!" gasped the darkey in alarm, dropping the iron on the floor, "I fought I'ze losin' m' senses."

"We are waiting for the story," said Hero. "You are losing valuable time. It will soon be dawn."

CHAPTER XXIV.

THE DARKEY'S COURTSHIP.

BY THE PORTER.

"WELL, Miss Hero, de case I'm 'bout ter tole yo' conspired jes dis way." The darkey spoke with marked enthusiasm, and every member of the obscured audience fancied he saw the whites of his eyes roll excitedly.

"Dey was a rathah pleasin'-faced yallar gal libin' daown on de James ribber, 'bout fo' mile below whaah dis niggah was hatched, an' wucked, an' libed til he impo'ted hi'self ter Richmond. An' I jes made up my mind dat dar was gwine ter be a berry obsequious funeral daown dat way berry soon, ef a lot o' prezumshus niggahs wa'n't berry keerful.

"Dey was mostwise bettah heeled dan me. One o' dem owned a five-acre tobaccy field, an' I only had a lee'le 'tater patch—a berry good specie ob sweet 'taters, too.

"Well, sah, dat dare imprudenshus niggah had de impodent sass ter perjure me by callin' me a low-doawn, gramniv'rous 'tater-bug, an' I was so rashful, an' so exasperatin', sah, dat I up an' say, 'Yo' am a cold, cowcumber-collud tobaccy-worm.' Den, sah, Johan,—she was de pleasin'-faced yallar gal,—she say, 'Yo' no ge'l'men ter go by de significashus names o' 'tater-bug an' tobaccy-worm, an' I don' wan' ter know yo'.'

"Now, sah, dey was a superspenshun ob my co'tin' faw long time. But I kinda keep watch out, an' I see

Johan wan' nothin' ter do wid dat cowcumber-collud tobaccy-worm, an' so I jes made up my mind ter go daown t' de plantashun whaah she hang out, an' p'litely pay my 'spects t' 'er. I happen ter 'member she once say she like 'rig'nality, so I resolutionized I'ze gwine ter be 'rig'nal de nex' time I propagate a mattermony propzishun. So I say, 'Johan,—' an' she kep' right on sweepin' de flo',—'Johan,' I say agin, as soft as de



"EF HER RABBIT-DOG HADN'T SPY A RAT."

wool on her lubly head. An' den she say, 'What fo' yo' wan' ter pester me? I'ze sayin' nuthin' t' yo'.' So I repetishun what I say befo', 'Johan, will yo' be de mudder ob my chil'ens?' An' I was jes gettin' my 'fectionate arms ready ter ketch de graceful reply, when she sudden-like roll her red eyes, an' show her white teef, an' den say: 'I wan' no 'tater-bug t' 'sult me. Doe yo' 'speck I wud 'low any udder yallar gal ter be

de mammy ob my picanninies 'cept m'self?' An' den she stoop daown, sah, an' fo' de Lawd! she grasp a red hot flat-i'on frum de stove, an' flinged it at de undefenshus head o' dis heah buck niggah, an' ef her rabbit-dog hadn't spy a rat jes dat fortunate moment, an' lep' off de table, an' kitched de flat-i'on right in de ribs, I wud not be libin' ter tole yo' ob it."

When the hysterical company had succeeded in subduing their laughter, the Wall Street man inquired, "Why don't you try it again, porter? 'Nothing risked, nothing gained.'"

"Dat jes whaah de trouble am," returned the darkey, his voice shooting into a falsetto. "Daze too *much* risk. No, sah! De Scripture say 'De feah ob knowledge am de beginnin' ob wisdom.' De nex' time I propagate ter dat yallar gal I'ze gwine ter wait till I'ze locked up in jail, den daze i'on bars 'tween us; an' den I say, 'Say yo' blur-eyed, funnel-moufed, cream-collud niggah, I'm in lub wid yo'; I'ze so full ob lub it am ebbin' out o' me all ober, an' ef yo's gwine ter bail me out, I'ze willin' ter mattermony yo' on de berry spot.' No, ge'l'men, ain't gwine ter be no mo' flat-i'on flingin' at dis niggah. I can't 'pend on no mungal rabbit-dog ter ketch de flat-i'on ebery time."

The porter's story was all too short. Any one to have heard him tell it would have known it was an actual experience. None were more convulsed than Hero.

"It seems to me," remarked the Professor, when the disturbance caused by the porter in feeding the fire had subsided, "that we have been entertained with a good measure of comedy to-night; a little tragedy, I think, would prove to be a pleasant diversion."

"I echo those sentiments," spoke the ecclesiast.

"I am willing to purchase my ticket any time," assented the Tragedian. "What style of tragedy do you prefer?"

"See here, thar, my friend," interposed the Don, twisting in his chair, "we don't want no Shakespeare. Yer must give us yer own experience, an' no lyin', nuther."

"Of course," returned the actor. "I have had enough thrilling experiences in my life to stock the lives of a dozen ordinary individuals. Perhaps the most tragically horrible of all was the adventure of an English army officer and myself in France during the Commune of Paris in '71."

CHAPTER XXV.

IN THE DUNGEON OF GUD.

A STORY BY THE TRAGEDIAN.

"THE Commune of Paris! I can see it, I can hear it now. I fancy myself again there. While the Versailles batteries are raining *mitraille* on every hand, the gay Parisians laugh and play. The theatres are open. One is liable at any moment to be seized and shot as a Royalist, and the better way to avoid suspicion is to mix with the people. Both 'My Aunt's Garters' and 'My Grandfather's Suspenders' are being played at the theatres. It is said that either is a suitable piece for making one forget the horrors of civil war, and thither through the boulevards my friend Captain Cuddyton and I hasten with our lives in our hands to pass the terrible evening. A shell shrieks through the air. We fall on our faces. It enters the window of a dwelling near, and death and destruction follow. We pass on till we enter the Rue de Rivoli. The cafés are in full blast. We note few strangers are in Paris. How came we to be so slow in getting away? Every gate to the bombarded city is closed and guarded. Can't we bribe a sentinel? It is a dangerous thing to attempt, but we must escape to London or America. To-morrow may find us forced into service by the Communists. Dictator Cluseret is called a great man and they say he will save Paris. But what is that to Cuddyton and me? He will not save us. Cluseret's late decree has burst like a bomb over the city. He exhorts every eligible soldier to force the *refractaire* into service, all between

nineteen and forty; he calls upon every one to be a spy upon his neighbor. One may be passing on the boulevard on business or some important errand and be forced to join the Commune. We may return from the theatre to our quarters, and while sleeping be dragged in our night-robes into the street, and perhaps to the nearest outpost. Or we may be blown into atoms by the *mitrailleuses*, or burned to death. Women called *petroleuses*, carrying concealed bottles of petroleum, select the houses for destruction and paste little posters upon them as they pass. Every morning from the Champs Elysées, Les Ternes, and Vaugirard may be seen families moving into the city to escape the terrors of the bombardment.

“The journals are suppressed and journalists imprisoned. We have just learned that Monsieur Richardet of the National was cast into prison yesterday for the sole crime of having requested a passport of the haughty barbarian, Rigault. God help us! We had passports, but they have been stolen. We suspect the culprits, but they are Communists. They would laugh to see us die. Why, the Commune thrusts priests into cells—imprisons Monsieur O’Yan, one of the directors of the seminary of St. Sulpice. It even ousts young girls from the convents. The Archbishop of Paris, we hear, is transferred from the Conciergerie to the prison of Mazas. Citizen Bergeret who drove to battle at Neuilly in a carriage is taken to the Conciergerie, because he suffered defeat. Now General Dombrowski has taken his place. He has a staff composed of the most famous and infamous of foreign parasites and rascals—those who have made Paris a great Bohemian Babel. These soldiers of fortune constitute the marrow of the Commune’s military forces.

“ While at the theatre we plan a desperate escape from the city. We steal to the Rue de la Paix and try to pass the sentinels, but they point their bayonets at us and shout ‘*Passez au large !*’ and we retreat and try another port. It is midnight. The cafés are closed—an unusual sight. Yet the streets are not devoid of life and of death. A squad of the rabble shout as we pass, ‘*Sacrebleu ! nom d’une pipe !*’ and we answer wisely, ‘*Vive la Commune !*’ and hurry on.

“ A poster announces the traitors have taken the Chateau of Bécon and have seized upon Asnieres. Sixty-three ecclesiasts are in the prisons of Mazas, the Conciergerie and La Santé. We must leave Paris this very night; to-morrow may see us enrolled on one side or the other—fighting. Yesterday a young man in the Rue Oudinot was run with a bayonet because he refused to obey orders to join the Commune. An acquaintance of mine was roused from sleep and hurried to the Port de la Chapelle. No one dares live at home. Last week two friends were rewarded for their bravery. They with two other *refractaires* impelled by despair went to the Port Saint Ouen and asked the commanding officer to let them out, and when he answered ‘*Zut !*’ the party fell upon him and his comrades and disarmed them, and then fled across the fields.

“ In view of this incident we dare not try that port. Besides, we have a better plan, yet one which involves much risk. Three nights ago we were at Belleville. The wine shops are open there at all hours. We were so fortunate as to make ourselves agreeable with some of the least ferocious of the Federals, and secretly arrange an escape for this very night. A soldier promised to be on duty at the Port de la Chapelle. Yes, for thirty francs each, he said he would allow us to

pay a visit to a dying mother at St. Denis. We must be at the Port de la Chapelle at the hour appointed, and walk on the rampart. The traitor will be on duty at one o'clock, and it is that already. He promised not to say '*Qui vive.*' Is his scheme to ensnare us? He will let us into the trench by a rope. *Diablo!* If we escape breaking our necks we may be shot. We mount the rampart excitedly. A dark object approaches. '*Grace au ciel, c'est notre ami!*' whispers Cuddyton. Three gold pieces jingle into his hands, and a moment later we are running across the country. Escaped at last! But, merciful heaven! we leap from the frying-pan right into the fire. The moon is rising late, yet too early to shield our mad escape for our lives. Captain Cuddyton is as lithe as a doe, but I am panting hard to keep apace with him. I look at my watch. Two o'clock? Indeed, how fast the last hour has passed. Stop! What is that? Moving shadows—yes, men! Those are not trees. And they are approaching rapidly. Hark! Those are side-arms rattling—Oh, God! we are discovered! What mercy can we expect from soldiers? Are they Federals or Royalists? We shall soon know. Cuddyton is as bold as a lion. An English officer who has fought in India and Africa, he meets his fate with a bravado spirit, yet I can see from his eyes and manner that he dreads the French butchers. '*Qui êtes vous?*' the first soldier inquires. '*Oung Anglae ze oung Americane,*' I stammer. '*Espions! Espions!*' shout the soldiers. '*Au Gud! Au Gud! à la lanterne!*' 'We are not spies,' corrects Cuddyton blandly, 'we are visitors to beautiful France. When the Commune broke out we had business that detained us in Paris. Our passports would allow us to depart in safety at any time; but alas! when we were about to leave, we found

they had been stolen. It was too late to replace them. Our Governments' Ministers had been withdrawn. To apply to Rigault was to ask for a prison's cell. We ask for clemency and good will. Help us to escape to St. Denis.' '*Espions! Espions!*' again the soldiers shout, but the leader silences them. '*Nous devons vérifier cela,*' says he. '*En attendant vous resterez ici à l'ombre. En avant . . . 'arche!*' he commands. Cuddyton and I exchange doleful glances and march on. Our doom is imminent. Only by a miracle can we be saved; it is only a surprise to us that we are not shot down on the spot. When France tastes blood she is like a tiger. But I try to be courageous—a British lion is with me. A dark spot now comes into view on the hill. Intuition tells me it is the Prison of Gud—Gud with her horrible dungeons—Gud from which no soul escapes except that it leaves the body. As we mount the stone steps the iron doors open hungrily, and the keeper receives us.

" '*Espions! Espions!*' shout the soldiers again furiously. '*Au Gud! à la lanterne!*' A few words are exchanged between the leader and the prison-keeper, and then we are searched and led down into the horrible dungeon. Suddenly Cuddyton exclaims, 'Captain Montalu! Do you not know me? Jack Cuddy—' '*Silence!*' commands the keeper savagely. '*Je ne reconnais ici que les Communards.*' As we wind through the dark and musty passages, my legs almost cave in beneath me. A Conciergerie or Mazas would be preferable to this awful prison.

" I have often in times of peace had a morbid desire to see this celebrated dungeon of Gud, and now I am compelled to see it too well. We are pushed brutally into the underground keep—but there are many keeps,

and perhaps well filled at this moment. Before the doors close upon us, Cuddyton again finds his voice. 'Do you forget the pledge at Saint Cyr in '56? Captain Montalu, may heaven ever find you true to honor—*L'Honneur d'un officier Français*.' But the doors slam shut. Cuddyton and I are buried from the world. Shall we suffocate, or starve, or what? I fall upon a heavy wooden bed and bury my face in my hands, and pray, yes, pray for the first time in my life, pray to God for deliverance. My weakness makes Cuddyton stout of heart. He sits beside me, and calls to me, 'Franklin, friend, listen—take comfort in a small hope. All Frenchmen are not bad. I saw in Montalu's eye a promise of our deliverance.'

“ ‘Deliverance!’ I gasp, looking up. ‘By whom? Heaven alone can rescue us.’ ‘Captain Montalu, of course,’ he replies. ‘Have you not heard me address him?’

“ ‘But I thought that was mere bravado.’ Cuddyton actually smiles—smiles while grim death is staring us in the face. He must have a heart of bronze. ‘Montalu and I were at school together fifteen years ago. We were classmates. Saint Cyr boys are known for their honor. We pledged eternal friendship and brotherhood, whatever emergency might happen, never dreaming of such an affair as this to put honor to the test.’

“ ‘But,’ I argue, ‘he refused to recognize you.’

“ ‘Because the soldiers were listening,’ argues Cuddyton. ‘Did you not see the savage look of suspicion the leader gave him? I hope the soldiers have gone to look for more victims. Alas, but I pity them!’

“ ‘*Diable!* Why did we not have a cloudy night?’ The Captain sinks upon the foot of the bed. I draw forth my handkerchief. I am weeping. He reminds

me of it. 'I weep for my wife, my mother and my little boy, not for myself,' I say. 'I hope, I have faith, yet, if we die here, no one will ever know what became of us.'

"The thought brings a hundred others to my mind. A delirium comes upon me. My head swims. I am growing insane. What is it Cuddyton is giving me? 'Pills—morphine pills! They will put you to sleep,' he says. 'If Montalu releases me, I shall save you. You saved my life at Malta; and I shall repay the debt I owe you. I shall not desert you. Sleep.' My eyelids close against my will, my mind becomes hazy, and a sweet and blissful slumber gives me a short rest from the mental anguish that I have been suffering. I say a short rest, but when I awake I seem to have slept for many days. How vivid is that recollection! Something unusual must have awakened me, for I swallowed two morphine pills. I fancy, as I open my eyes, I hear the door slam. Am I crazed, or is it a nightmare?

"'Cuddyton!' I call. No answer. 'My dear Captain! Cuddyton! Friend!' I shout madly, hysterically, desperately. No sound comes back but the echoes of my own frantic calls. Has Cuddyton swallowed the remainder of the medicine? Would he be so cowardly as to take his own life? The awful possibility stifles me. I attempt to rise and search the darkness, for now the moon has come around so as to stream a blade of light through the crevice in the wall, dividing the dungeon into two parts. Oh, God! Can I believe my senses? Am I deceived? Am I mad? I am bound to the heavy bed, bound hand and foot, doomed to die. Who has perpetrated the infamous deed? *Mon Dieu!* It cannot be Cuddyton, my friend, my comrade of a year, whom I rescued from a wreck at the

risk of my life. The dreadful consciousness of my predicament throws me into a cold perspiration. I struggle in my frenzy to free my arms—arms? but I feel that I have but one! Yet where is the other? Something binds me to the bed frame. Heavenly mercy! My arm is numb, bound so tightly that the cords have stopped the circulation of the blood. Ere relief comes,—but I can hope for no relief. I am wandering! I am crazed! My brain is all confused. I am again in the Rue Montmartre, fleeing from the guards. Again in the Rue St. Roch, one of the chief mourners in a funeral. My friend's little boy is in the hearse, and he and I are walking behind. A shrill cry reaches me from the crowd below, and a shell bursts in the hearse and scatters the child's remains to the four winds. Horrors!

“ Another scene. Cuddyton and I are passing down the Rue Neuve des Petits Champs, and encounter a wild manifestation on its way to the Place Vendome. The gamins cry: ‘*A bas les traitres! Vive la Commune!*’ and Cuddyton falls at my side pierced by a bullet. Again the Captain and I are at the Hôtel de Ville, forced into the ranks. I hear the tocsin ring, the rappel beating, and the command ‘*En avant!*’ But brothers are killing brothers; why not we kill one another and end our misery? Then I am back in the dungeon of Gud. What calls me here? The rats! The rats! One has bitten through my thumb to the bone, and the shock has brought me to my senses. My shriek of pain frightens the hungry rodents back into the darkness, but they are bold, and having tasted flesh are savage with hunger. There! They outline in the blade of moonlight. They cross it, I hear them squealing at my bed side. God save me! Release me! My

struggles and screams again startle the huge rats, but they divine by my words my utter helplessness and despair, and approach in greater force. The smell of dead flesh has attracted them. If they believe me dead by their sense of smell, they cannot mistake the evidence of their hearing. How can words portray the hideous scene? The rats tear away my coat-sleeve and rip slices of flesh from my benumbed arm. Their teeth grate on the nerves, they wrench muscles and the bones. I see them retreat into the narrow stream of light and devour my own body. They will eat in their gluttony beyond the cords that bind me, and I shall bleed to death. My suffering is excruciating. Alone in that dark, mysterious dungeon, alone with the rats and the devil! Has the good God who created me, deserted me? Could the cruelest human father inflict such wanton torture upon his child? I feel the enraged rats scrape the bare bones of my arm, sending electric shocks to my brain. Only the tough muscles hold the bones together. I have been waiting to hear them fall, to see them dragged into the moonlight. In my crazed condition I cry to God for mercy one instant and blaspheme Him the next. I am not Franklin, the scion of an American patriot; I am a raving lunatic. The scene changes, and I am in all parts of the world at once. My arm in one country, my leg in another, my head in another, and so on; but I am complete, and my wisdom is greater and my physical form more beautiful than any living mortal. I am in the interior of the earth, where all my parts collect, and the lava welds them together. And then I am in Hell, and I burn as though a flame were consuming me, my right arm is burnt to a red heat, and then, then—God, merciful God flings the devil aside and drenches me with a flood of water and



“ALONE WITH THE RATS AND THE DEVIL!”

puts out the flames in time to save me. And I awake from my terrible dream with face and neck wet, and a candle-light flaring in my eyes. The sight of a familiar countenance recalls my reason. 'Cuddyton!' I gasp, 'it is you? Do not deny it. You are my friend still? Don't say no, I am dying!'

" 'I shall not desert you, Franklin,' he whispers. 'Drink this—drink, it is brandy. I got it from Captain Montalu.'

"The brandy gives me strength and courage, and clarifies my brain. I hear 'Come!' The Captain releases me. 'I have killed him,' whispers Cuddyton. 'His attendants are drugged.' So saying, he starts to unbind my fleshless arm; I shriek with pain. 'The rats have gnawed it off!' I gasp, and would faint but for another draught of brandy. Cuddyton groans in a tone of such pity and horror that I never can forget it. He tears off his shirt, and, stripping it in bands, binds the stub of my arm tightly to stop the flow of blood when he shall release me. I am almost too weak to rise, but he puts the flask to my lips, and taking me bodily in his arms carries me out of that horrible dungeon, out of those musty passages, out of the doors of Gud—Gud, whence no prisoners were ever known to escape before. The moon is shining, but we must move on. I am balancing between two awful alternatives, death from the loss of blood, and death from recapture. I take the chance of the latter.

"We reach St. Denis an hour later, just before dawn, Captain Cuddyton in high spirits and I nearly dead from loss of blood. How I ever managed to hold out so long is more than I can conceive. I used to know a physician and surgeon, a Royalist, living in the Rue St. Denis near the Cathedral, and thither Cuddy-

ton drags me. The old man has long given up surgery on account of his unsteady hand, but when he beholds my skeleton arm, and hears Cuddyton's story, he falls into tears, and in the impulse of the moment his enthusiasm over our heroic escape from the Dungeon of Gud prompts him to kneel beside the couch whereon I lie, and kiss my cheek.

"*'Vite, mes instruments !'*" he shouts to his servant, and then giving me some brandy which he has drugged, he exhorts me *'Du cœur ! nous allons vous arranger cela,'* and cuts off my arm's gory skeleton, dresses it neatly, and watches me many weeks like a loving father, till I recover sufficiently to proceed on my journey. I am saved! Saved from the horrible death which confronted me in that most terrible and ghastly Dungeon of Gud. Could I but blot the recollection from my mind! Each year since, on the anniversary of that awful night, my arm seems to be in place undergoing that excruciating torture, and I cry out in my sleep, 'The rats! the rats!'"

As the Tragedian finished his graphic and exceedingly tragic narrative, the light of dawn came through the upper panes of the south window, and brought him into general view. Then, with his left hand he shook his empty right sleeve before our eyes in a manner to cause every one a dreadful shudder.

"That is the most terrible story of an actual experience I ever heard," said the divine.

"Funny," observed the Doctor, "I never noticed you were minus an arm."

"If yer ever want a feller ter lend yer a hand," said the Don, "jest call on me."

Then the Tragedian stretched forth his lost right arm,

and clasped the Don's hand. The Don was not the only one astonished. The Tragedian had in the darkness slyly slipped the arm from the sleeve, thinking to give emphasis to his thrilling story.

"I *am* so relieved!" sighed Hero. "How I *did* pity you!"

"I was asked to entertain you all with tragedy," replied the player, smiling at the success of his joke, "and, of course, it necessitated a little acting."

Everybody except the broker looked as though he hoped there would be no more tragedy; he remarked with a hearty chuckle, that he hadn't *taken stock in the story at all*.

"Now we are nearing the realm of Day, gentlemen," said Hero sweetly, "is it not time to think of breakfast?"

"It's time to *eat* breakfast," responded the Don emphatically; "I've been *thinkin'* 'bout it all night." And the Tragedian added:

"'Tis true, fair daughter; and this blessed day,
Ever in France shall be kept festival:
To solemnize this day, the glorious sun
Stops in his course, and plays the alchemist;
Turning, with splendour of his precious eye,
The meagre cloddy earth to glittering gold:
The yearly course, that brings this day about,
Shall never see it but a holiday!"

"I have attended both evening and matinee performances at the theatre," observed the Professor, "but I never before knew a play to last as long as this, except in a Chinese theatre."

"We are making up for lost time," explained the Comedian.

" I reckon yer must be six months out er a job," was the Don's rejoinder.

Then the idle group of story-tellers scattered, and adapted themselves to the various duties required of them in assisting Hero with the morning meal.

CHAPTER XXVI.

BREAKFAST.

“ ‘ HERE lies the East: doth not the day break here ? ’ ” said the Tragedian, as he stood in the east window, watching for the sun to rise.

“ ‘ No ! ’ ” shouted the comedian from his humble cot in a tone of despair.

“ ‘ O, pardon, sir, it doth ; and yon gray lines,
That fret the clouds, are messengers of day, ’ ”

persisted the former, slamming the door with a vengeance.

The kitchen at once presented an interesting scene. A woman's forethought had caused the dressed rooster to be already six hours boiling in order to eradicate presumably as many years of toughness, and now the dressed actor set about to prepare it to be served impartially to the unlucky thirteen without engendering death.

The jovial Drummer of “ The Three C's ” took charge of the beans. The Wail Street man, who claimed Irish descent on one side of the house, pared and prepared the potatoes on the other side, and the Lawyer fried the Spanish onions, he being the only one who understood that language. Snow was being turned into water by the willing ecclesiast, while the sugar bowl was refilled with glucose by the Don, who told a remarkable story meanwhile. The Doctor dissected the pork, and prepared the *relieves* ; the Professor measured out the corn meal for a new pan of johnny

cake which Hero was prevailed upon to bake, and the Dude, who claimed while in the dark that he was an artist, sat at the table trying to draw a picture to illustrate the Journalist's menu. His face during the operation served as an interesting study, for he drew with his mouth as well as with his pencil, prompting the comedian to observe:

“ ‘He is either a god, or a painter, for he makes faces.’ ”

When the porter was not engaged in supplying fuel for the fire, he watched the transformation of the rooster in a manner to excite an increase of appetite in all the company. Leander, of course, was compelled to remain in bed and watch the proceedings. And as for Hero, she directed the cooking and assisted with the culinary affairs generally so gracefully, and with such apparent confidence, that every man was inspired with righteous enthusiasm.

Amid the laughter and chatter and the noise of active feet, the Tragedian handed Hero the croquettes which he had prepared, and dropping a courtesy and saying:

“ ‘Be now as a prodigal of all dear grace
As Nature was in making graces dear,
When she did starve the general world beside,
And prodigally gave them all to you,’ ”

re-arranged the still damp garments drying on the clothes-bars by the stove.

Presently the odor of baking beans caused the Don to look up from the sugar bowl. As he did so he saw a sight that caused him to roar with laughter. The Drummer was providing a free show in a corner by standing on his head.

“ Do you always exercise that way before a meal ? ”

inquired the Preacher in astonishment. It was a whole minute before the acrobat gained his feet and breath, and replied, still crimson in the face: "I don't do that for exercise, it's for my hair. A noted physician once told me that baldness was due to the fact that the stratum of fat between the partitions of the cranium falls with some people earlier than with others, and that when this occurs there is left no support for the hair; consequently it falls out. I make it a rule to stand on my head two minutes before each meal to allow the fat to run back in place. *That's* why I got down on my head."

"Yes," said the comedian, "I notice you've got down on your head, it is plainly visible."

"Yer will present a ruther destitute condishun at the resurreckshun," added the Don, grinning. And the Doctor, whose own pate evidenced a predisposition to barrenness, offered comfort in the remark: "Don't let that worry you, Mr. Drummer; hair, you know, grows after death."

"Now, porter," said Hero, "you may announce that the banquet awaits."

"Blanket wakes, ge'l'men," called the darkey, hammering loudly on the dripping-pan.

If any snakes played a part in Leander's dream, the clatter-raps in his ears frightened them into their holes. The startled comedian voiced a yell which broke his left ear-drum and relieved the window of its last pane, the other panes having been eradicated by a hot ironing with a flat-iron during the night.

Each member at once took the same seat assigned to him at the midnight supper, with the exception of the Tragedian, whose quadruped chair had lost two legs, and required an uncommonly steady man to balance it.

He gallantly invited himself to share Hero's large arm-chair.

Said he, "It's rather a tight squeeze, but we are not so likely to fall out with one another."

"For that very reason," returned Hero, "we are all the more likely to have a falling out;" and as she arose from the chair the actor reached for his own and assumed an attitude of one about to milk a kicking cow. The ecclesiast alone was standing. The half-starved company expected to be tortured by another endless blessing. But suddenly the Preacher asked the Wall Street man to say grace. The financier looked up astonished and embarrassed. He never remembered having offered a blessing at a repast, but he was too proud to confess it before the charming young widow of whom, all had noticed, he had become visibly enamored. Therefore, he arose to his feet, bowed his head, and with hesitation and much apparent confusion called to account his talent for rhyming, and said:

"Now we set us down to eat,
We pray the Lord our stomachs treat,
But if we die before we rise,
Take us, O Lord, to Paradise.
Amen."

Every head had bowed with all due reverence and seriousness, but the unexpected success of the broker in paraphrasing the well-known prayer to suit the direful emergency, caused even the Preacher trouble in strangling his risibles. Said the latter, glancing toward the bed, "Why didn't you say 'amen'? Are you not thankful for this manna?"

"I am *thankful*," replied Leander, "but you see 'I had most need of blessing, and 'amen' stuck in my throat.'"

The broker's blessing was not more than concluded, however, when twelve pairs of hands, charged by as many gastrolatrous dynamos, pitched into the repast in a manner to show conclusively that they were hardly adequate to supply the demands of the voracious appetites which composed the plant. Five pairs of hands alone reached for the menu, and upset the molasses jug on the fried onions. But the Professor secured the trophy and politely handed it to Hero, saying, "My dear madam, what will you have?"

"Well," replied Hero, "since the Journalist has taken such pains to design the menu-card for our diversion, I would suggest that he read it aloud. It appears to have been written in Sanskrit."

"The epicure will proceed to read his epic," announced the Lawyer. And the Journalist began, much against his inclination, to translate the extravagant, if not classical, "epic."

BREAKFAST.

SOMEWHERE, AMERICA,
March 13, 1888.

MENU.

Huttres sur coquilles. Blue Points (. . .).

POTAGES.

Mulligatawny. Chicken, à la Reine.
Mock-turtle soup.

HORS D'ŒUVRE.

Croquettes de ris de veau en caisse à la Soyer. Water-cresses.
Cayenne pepper. Pickle lily.

POISON.

Smoked herring, a la Lackawanna.
Filet de sole au gratin de Parmesan.

RELÊVES.

Saddle of Antelope.

Haricots Verts.

Spaghetti, au gratin.

Terrine de foie-gras.

Onion fricassee.

Ipecac.

ENTRÉES.

Baked beans, en decolette.

Terrapin à la Maryland en Casserole.

Rooster-eyes on toast, sautee aux Fines Herbes.

SORBET.

Punch Surprise.

Au kirsch.

Baba.

ROTI.

Filet de hog en Chicago.

Pate de Hoboken, historié.

Lettuce and Celeri Mayonnaise.

Onions, fried or natural.

Potatoes, dressed and undressed.

GIBIER.

Rooster crow-quettes sur toast au cresson.

Salade de laitue en mud.

GLACE.

Ices, à la cistern.

Snow drops.

Fancy creams.

Icebergs petits.

Blizzard forms.

PÂTISSERIE.

Pyramides de nougat et de macarons.

Mottoes.

Pound cake.

Onion pie, hard sauce.

DESSERT.

Apple sauce.

Fruit : the date.

PAIN.

Hot corn cake, à la johnny.

Corn muffs.

Coffee, with condensed snow.

CHEESE.

Fromages de Roquefort et Camembert.

WINES AND SPIRITS.

TOBACCO PUFFS.

TABLE DECORATIONS—SUNFLOWER.

The table presented a very inviting appearance. In view of the artist's failure to provide decorations for the menu-card, a bouquet of sunflowers was fashioned from pieces of decorated wall-paper stripped from the sitting-room walls. The flowers were neatly cut out with a knife, and held in place by being wedged into sticks and bunched together in the nozzle of a colander turned upside down on the table.

"These crow-quettes are simply delicious," observed the Doctor.

"We may yet have to pay for them, if the owners of this shanty turn up before we leave," said the Professor.

"I believe that a bill came with the rooster," added the Drummer.

These remarks brought the Dude to life. "B' Jove!" he exclaimed, "I destwoyed the bill with the head, doncher know!"

"You're to be congratulated upon getting ahead of even a rooster," said the Comedian facetiously.

The Lawyer was endeavoring to get at the marrow of the wishbone. Said he, feelingly: "This is a gnawing."

And the broker, lifting a rooster-eye on toast, added: "Here's looking at you, boys."

But there was no one at the table who displayed more activity than the down-easter. The reputation which he had established on the train, to say the least, was improved upon. "Them crow-quettes 're as fine as I ever et," he said, eyeing the empty plate; "in fact, thar's a pertickelar harmony pervadin' my tastes. Take, fer instance, a *coquette*. Ter my thinkin' she puts all other women in th' shade, jest as *croquettes* 're th' trump cards of the hull pack of 'epics.' I allus

prefer mittens of th' *crochet* stitch, an' as fer perlite games, gimme th' good old game of *croquet*."

"Most extraordinary fancy," remarked the Doctor. And the Poet added: "Those words are not rhythmical, or harmonious in pronunciation or spelling. Queer fellow."

On the theory "To the victor belongs the spoil," the comedian was placed at a disadvantage. So interested was each member of the company in his own welfare that the bedridden actor was completely neglected; and, becoming convinced that he would be left to starve if he did not make an appeal, he suddenly declaimed dramatically:

"I do entreat your grace
to pardon me.

I know not by what
power I am made bold,
Nor how it may concern
my modesty

In such a presence here,
to plead my thoughts;

but as I wear not more
than a collar to make
me presentable at table,
I think 'a friend should
bear a friend's infirmity.' "



"NOT MORE THAN A COLLAR."

The pathos in Leander's words touched the heart of his brother player, who replied:

"With all my heart, my liege,
What touches us ourself shall be last serv'd,"

and forthwith carried a plate of mysteries and a cup of

bogus coffee to Leander, who received it gratefully, yet with fear and trembling, soliloquizing feelingly:

“Sweet remembrance! Now, good digestion wait on appetite,
And health on both.”

The Good Samaritan, having lost valuable time by conveying food to the unfortunate one, now pitched into the meal with double emphasis. But, suddenly, he dropped the wooden spoon which had just conveyed a load of mashed potatoes to his windpipe, and, after considerable choking, extracted a needle from his mouth. When his red and blue countenance had finally resumed its natural color, he gasped, “Great Scott! How came a needle in this food?” He looked suspiciously at the embarrassed hostess. She, however, promptly replied apologetically, “I haven’t had a needle about me, unless, perhaps, it happened to be upon the Lawyer’s smoking-jacket which he so graciously loaned me.”

The counsellor was quick to defend himself, at the same time chivalrous enough to exonerate the amiable hostess, and he replied: “The presence of the needle is easily accounted for; the farmer must have left it in the patch when he sowed the potatoes.”

“You are discharged,” said the actor, smiling. “Possibly I have been eating too recklessly, but that Elijah in bed over there worries the life out of me.”

The broker was now seen casting admiring glances at Hero. “I am charmed with your cooking,” said he, “I haven’t eaten the like since my wife died.”

It was the first intimation the party had received that the Wall Street man was a widower, and the sudden revelation startled those who had allowed themselves to fall in love with the winsome young woman.

The financier, observing that his flirtation was detected, added shortly: "I am hungry as a bear, which I suppose accounts for my abnormal appetite."

"You remind me more of a seal," corrected the Doctor, who also had noticed the broker's "fishing" tendencies.

"How?" queried the widower.

"Let me tell him," interposed the attorney, with a humorous twinkle in his eye. "A seal is defined as some adhesive substance, capable of receiving an impression." The remark was magical in its effect. In order to hide her blushes Hero found a pretext to visit the stove in company with the coffee-pot, which, too, felt embarrassed by the personalities so freely indulged in. And the comedian prolonged the play by quoting from his patron saint:

"If she be made of white and red,
Her faults will ne'er be known;
For blushing cheeks by faults are bred,
And fears by pale-white shown.
Then, if she fear, or be to blame,
By this you shall not know;
For still her cheeks possess the same,
Which native she doth owe."

Hero, returning, balanced herself in the rocker, and poured the coffee in a manner to prove her to be an expert juggler, while the Don manipulated his mammoth pocket-knife as a combination knife, fork and spoon so savagely, that the Drummer at his right kept his eye on him constantly.

"Condensed snow is a pretty weak substitute for condensed milk," observed the Preacher.

"And," complained the Professor, "I find sand in

my coffee, sand in my—my unpronounceable mush, and sand in most everything."

Here the Doctor uttered an impolite ejaculation and extracted a boulder of some dimensions from a tooth, prompting the down-easter to observe: "Th' folks must 've mixed gravel with the chicken-feed at the grist."

"Yes," said Leander, "'A table full of welcome makes scarce one dainty dish,'" and he called the porter to take away a plate of something which had a very beautiful name on the menu-card, but presented an unpalatable aspect.

"Where is th' apple sass?" asked the Don, scrutinizing the empty dishes.

"Oh, that disappeared long ago," said Hero, with a chuckle; "it was made of evaporated apples."

"About as material as the spirits," observed the Doctor, who had tipped the molasses jug and various other receptacles, in his diligent search for an appetizer.

Hero had eaten but little breakfast. When questioned concerning her suspicious behavior, she claimed that she inhaled so much of the aroma of the cooking that she felt thoroughly satisfied. The only other sensible member was the Professor. He drank a goodly portion of hot water before his meal, and when questioned by the Doctor if it was a habit of his, he simply quoted: "Washington said, 'To be prepared for war is one of the most effectual means of preserving peace.'"

In less than ten minutes the wisdom of his words was manifest to all. No war so deplorable as internal dissensions.

The porter had little to say, but suddenly the Dude observed: "B' Jove! Doncher know, I cahnt fwind

the bluepwoints." And the poor fellow really showed great surprise when the Drummer explained to him the meaning of that feature of the menu-card and the points in the parentheses ingeniously made by the Journalist's blue pencil. But it was more interesting to note the Don's study over the various languages represented in the menu. He attempted, finally, to translate one aloud, with the hopes that he might trace on the table an inviting dish which the title suggested, and quoted: "'Pyramides de nougat et de macarons,' what does it mean? I never wuz up in Chinee."

The Journalist was about to explain, when the Don resumed. Said he: "'Cordin' ter this, th' pryamids et the macaroons."

"Must have," added the Drummer, "and didn't leave any for us."

"Awnd I don't see awny mock-tuhtle soup, doncher know," came the idiot's second inquiry.

The Journalist was compelled to explain. "This bean soup," said he, "is not turtle soup, simply *mock* turtle soup—make-believe turtle soup, don't you understand?"

"Purty rich, purty rich," laughed the Don,—"'not th' soup, but th' joke."

The divine was seen tugging at the herring. "Let me margin up on that terrapin," said the broker.

"It's tough enough to be the filet of sole," said the Preacher.

"Thar's plenty of leather in this grub," remarked the Don. "Yer needn't complain about soles; I've ben chewin' on this saddle fer twenty minutes."

"Isn't it down yet?" asked the divine.

"Yes," said the Don, "down on th' programme as 'Saddle of Antelope.' I'll bet my eye-teeth agin your

grinders it's saddle of rhinoceros." It was only a piece of pork.

Hero was reading the "epic." Said she, presently, "I find some errors in the French; there should be another *s* in the *poison*."

"It's spelt correctly for that particular menu," said the ecclesiast, who regretted having touched the herring.

"And," continued Hero, "should there not be a *du* to the *pain*?"

At once the Professor arose from his chair, and bending, and pressing his hand to his stomach, exclaimed, "Madam, the pain is just due," and began to walk the floor.

"An' I've diskivered another error," said the Don. "Thar's an *n* left off th' word Rôtin."

"Professor," said the Tragedian, "kindly parse the 'Fancy Creams.'"

"I call it a *noun-entity*—creams in fancy only," replied the pedagogue promptly.

"Use plenty of merlasses on yer pate de Hoboken," advised the Don; "yer'll find it a leetle rancid. An' whar's th' baby? By gum! I allus thought I'd like ter know how one tasted."

"How queer these onions do taste," observed the ecclesiast, blinking like a bullfrog. "They don't taste natural; I suppose they must be fried."

"Our strong possession and our right for us," quoted the Tragedian, helping himself lavishly.

"*Your strong possession and more than your right!*" came an exclamation of anguish from amid animated bed clothes, as Leander spilt a fresh cup of boiling coffee upon his chest. The havoc in the generally peaceful bed attracted almost universal attention, and the mass of kicking, flying, shooting sheets, crazy-quilts, pillows

and writhing humanity assumed the character of a tornado. "I've done it!" he exclaimed, "branded myself!"

"Hark! What's that?" exclaimed the Preacher, in an attitude of listening. And the Tragedian quoted: "'Thrice the brindred cat hath mew'd.'"

All eyes were turned toward the doorway of the sitting-room whence emanated a feline voice, and then following, a big, black cat.

"'I come, Graymalkin!'" exclaimed Leander.

And immediately as the Doctor suggested "cat stew" for their next meal there happened such a spontaneous spring into the doorway that the cat, cut off from retreat, leaped into the air, and with a second bound and a yell ran up the stovepipe, and danced on its hot joint in such a lively clog-dance that the banqueters were convulsed. The porter rushed for the crowbar and, holding it high, watched the screaming feline, which was bewailing its fate in changing from a freeze-out to a stove-roast.

Unable, finally, to endure further torture from scorched paws, it made a mad leap for the doorway, but the darkey with a swing of the crowbar knocked it on to the table, causing a general upsetting of dishes and people, and a momentary panic.

But above this noise came a loud hammering sound from the adjoining room, and, the Dude being missed, the Don called, "What th' devil is th' matter in thar?" The table shook, and the dishes rattled, and the break-fasters paused and listened.

"B' Jove!" came the reply, "I'm bweaking up the pound cake with the cwowbah, doncher know."

"It must be the genuine article," observed the Preacher.

During all this time the wind was howling madly, and the house seemed to quake as it never had before. But now the room was warm and light, the blizzard had no terrors for the comfortable party.

Suddenly, a terrific tornado seemed to have struck the house, and a loud crash on the floor above told plainly that the chimney had blown down; aye, there was even stronger evidence as a single brick crashed through the ceiling and struck the porter on the head, knocking him down. Brick-dust flew everywhere like atoms from a burst bomb, but luckily nobody was seriously injured—not even the darkey, who scratched his woolly head for a few minutes, and then rose to his feet without comment or complaint. Of course, all were severely startled and, at first, thought the darkey killed.

The Don, the Preacher and Hero alone remained at the table. The Journalist was pacing the floor with menu in hand and pains in his chest. The Dude, who had heard that rocking after a meal aided digestion, was violently reeling to and fro on the floor, and the Lawyer was swallowing a dose of powders prepared by the Doctor, who, himself, had recently choked with a capsule of castor-oil as big as a jellyfish.

"There was only one decent article on the breakfast table," said the Tragedian.

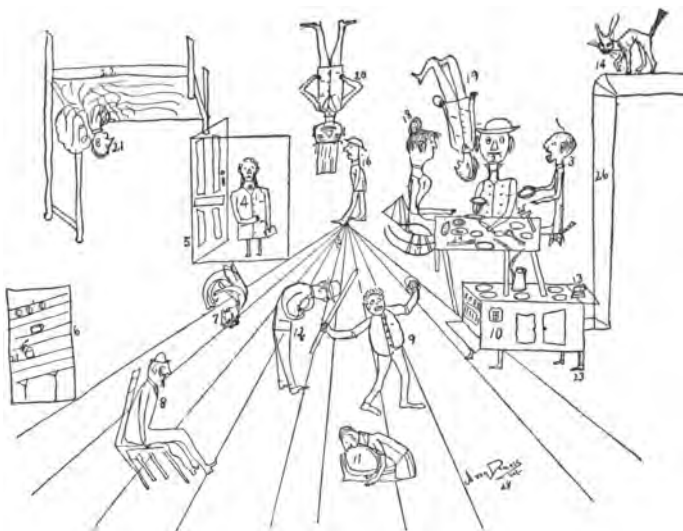
"To wit, what?" interrogated the Drummer.

"Am I speaking to an epicure?" returned the actor.

"To who?" queried the illiterate Bostonian.

"Why, man, you talk like an owl," said the actor, gulping down a mouthful, like a toad swallowing a snake; "first it's 'tu-whit' and next it's 'tu-whoo.'"

"Reminds me of a story I heard the other day," said the Drummer. "A tramp entered a Bowery restau-



"DANCED ON ITS HOT JOINT IN SUCH A LIVELY CLOG-DANCE."

An off-hand drawing (very much off), made by the artist (dude), from life, at the time.

KEY TO ABOVE PICTURE.

- | | |
|--------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 1. Hero. | 14. Cat. |
| 2. The Don. | 15. Perspective of kitchen. |
| 3. Preacher. | 16. Journalist. |
| 4. Wall Street man. | 17. Uneasy rocker. |
| 5. Door of sitting-room. | 18. Psyche knot. |
| 6. Pantry. | 19. Doctor. |
| 7. Drummer's free show. | 20. Lawyer. |
| 8. Tragedian. | 21. Leander. |
| 9. Sancho. | 22. Bedstead. |
| 10. Stove. | 23. Stove legs. |
| 11. Dude. | 24. Fork. |
| 12. Professor. | 25. Axe. |
| 13. Flat-iron. | 26. Stove pipe. |

(Picture reduced from 150 x 100. The smaller the picture is reduced the better it looks.—ENGRAVER.)

rant with five cents, and was asked which he would have, soup or hominy. He, entertaining vivid recollections of his late *mêlée* with a squad of Italians, replied, 'Harmony, man, let's have harmony, soup or no soup.' "

"Lawyer," called the Tragedian, "pass around the pipe; those tobacco puffs look light."

"I wish the corn muffs had risen like those puffs," moaned the Professor.

"Where did you find such fine tobacco?" queried the actor, taking a draw.

"In this coat pocket," answered the attorney, glancing at the strange garment he had on.

"You've got on my coat," said the actor.

This called the attention of every individual to his own dress.

"And you," said the Tragedian, addressing the divine—"you have on my trousers."

Here everybody broke out in prolonged laughter.

"I loaned somebody my breeches," said the Don, "but I'll be gum if I kin recklect who," and at once Hero, in blushing confusion, quietly left her chair and proceeded to examine the wash, hanging by the fire, which joined with the men in a perfect roar.

By this time everybody had left the table, and several hands began to screen from the eye the repulsive vision of the leavings of the last meal in that abandoned shanty. The memory of the contents of the lively meal-bag and other articles was still fresh to all.

The Preacher was observed to be in a thoughtful mood. Presently he looked up and, without discriminating among the learned present, inquired of the man next him, who happened to be no less a scholar than the Don, "Are you up on the Diet of Worms?"

"No, I'm down on it," said the Don emphatically, twisting and squirming in his chair.

"Ah," said the Preacher, "I guess you don't catch my meaning."

"If yer had caught as many worms as I have in them cakes yer wouldn't be able ter catch anythin' else; I'd hesitate takin' a snooze jest now, unless I wuz chained ter th' bedpost. If my legs give out, I kin crawl ter th' train an' give yer odds an' beat yer," replied the Don.

"Are *you* acquainted with the Diet of Worms?" inquired the ecclesiast of the Professor.

"I recollect it, yes."

"Who was the fellow who said he'd go even if all hell opposed him?"

"Why, Luther himself," said the Professor.

"Then, just fancy I am Luther." And so saying the Preacher arose and went to the door. But he soon returned to his chair. "There is no sign of a train," said he excitedly.

Everybody rushed to the door. "They have left us!" "Deserted!" "Lost!" exclaimed several voices.

"What shall we do?" Hero inquired despondently.

The snow-imprisoned travelers at once showed genuine alarm at their gloomy predicament. Several walked the floor thoughtfully; some resumed their seats and endeavored to be cheery, and four set out in pairs to explore the cellar and upper floor.

The Doctor's late suggestion of a cat stew was recalled by the darkey, who hinted he had better hunt up the abandoned creature and dress it for the next meal.

While the broker appeared to be a large-hearted, amiable fellow, there was no one in the party as inquisitive as he to know who and what his companions were. It

will be remembered that during the darkness of the early night he referred to them as possible Zulus or Hottentots.

"I'm a real estate and insurance agent," said the Don in reply to the broker's query. "I'm on my way t' New York ter put through a big land deal. Yes, born in Maine, an' lived thar till I could vote, then steered fer Dakote. When I got so I could eat hay, I migrated ter Minnesota. No, in St. Paul—purty lively town—can't complain—drivin' a good trade in dirt an' graveyard insurance. Hand yer my card later."

"No consequence," returned the Wall Street man. "Saint Paul is a good name; anything to address you by."

"Better drop the 'Saint,'" suggested the conscientious down-easter, "yer know I'm a real estate agent."

"Plain Paul, then, very good. You are not a hypocrite if you do belong to the biggest skinflint business outside of plumbing. My dealings with both trades would induce me to take my chances in cornering the wheat market in preference, any day, risky as it is known to be. Whether I win or lose I know where I stand, but a man often buys real estate one day and wakes the next to find himself and property floating in water."

"Our professions 're somethin' alike," answered the Don, with a humorous squint of the eye. "I once bo't some railroad stocks an' purty soon diskivered *them* watered."

"Ah," said the banker, "but you, as an ex-farmer, must know that stock must be watered to be kept alive."

"But," answered the Don, with a chuckle, "I got rid of a piece of marsh-land once in order ter keep

myself alive. Ha, ha, he, he! great deal that wuz; a question of life an' death fer myself an' best girl. Hadn't oughter laugh 'bout it, but can't help it when I think on it. He, he, ha, ha!" and the jolly Maine man slapped his leg and looked at Hero, who also smiled.

"You haven't paid for your ticket yet, Mr. Don," she said; "see if you can cheer us up a little."

"Wall, reckon may as well take things as they come; wuz in a worse hole than this once."

"When was that?"

"Oh, when the Injins got after me an' I hid in a dead cow."

"Gracious!" exclaimed the Professor, "didn't you find it close?"

"Rather."

At this moment the four explorers entered, two of them with grave and serious countenances. Hero, alarmed at their appearances, was about to question them, when the Don interrupted: "I'm goin' ter tell yer how I got rid of a piece of marsh-land once. I reckon yer will say it wuz a bully idee; biggest land deal I ever heered tell of. Jest listen."

CHAPTER XXVII.

A BULLY IDEE.

A STORY BY THE DOWN-EASTER.

ONCE upon a time thar lived a very purty girl named Vasaline, an' a very romantic young feller named Me, an'—"

"Pardon interrupting," said the Professor, "but before I forget, let me ask how the young lady got such a lubricated name?"

"Wall, 'twuz this way. The minister what baptiz-ed her wuz sufferin' from a 'cold in 'is 'ead,' an' had vasaline on his brain, an' made a mistake, an' called her Vasaline 'stead of Gwendoline."

"What a horrible affliction for the girl to bear!" said Hero feelingly.

"Vasaline may be oily," observed the senior actor, "but it is refined."

"Proceed," said the banker.

"Now, Vasaline wuz th' most virtuous girl I ever sot eyes on. She had only one leetle naughty trait, an' it wuzn't her por-trait nuther, but simply confounded obstinacy. Yes, sirree, th' only blot on her angelic disposishun; an' it got so that nuther 'er parents ner friends could manage her, except by artifice. In all their opinions an' wishes they jest had ter take th' opposite stan' ter what they thought an' intended.

"But Vasaline wuz as slippery as they make 'em. She wuz a 'bute,' an' she come from Butte (Montana), an' she caught on ter th' racket, an' once in a while

surprised somebody by takin' a different stan' ter what wuz expected of 'er.

" Now, one of these puzzled friends of hern happened ter be yer humble servant. Her charms wuz more'n I could resist, specially her large violet eyes that shun like blue dimonds. I lost my heart t' her completely. But th' love seemed ter be all on one side,—wall, th' heart's on one side, but I don't mean that,—an' I pergressed only in the number of perposals I give 'er, else I wuz so blind in love with 'er I failed ter see 'er as she wuz, which I reckon is a pervailin' trait 'mong lovers. But she wouldn't have me. So I took jest th' opposite posishun, an' wuz all of a sudden indifferent, an' denied my passion. Then she sed she wuz relieved an' glad, an' trusted my feelin's wouldn't change with th' next wind. This wuz more'n I could swaller 'tween meals. I up an' denied th' denial, an' called th' denyor a blarsted liar, an' I'll be gum! if I didn't jest keep up that operashun of denyin' th' denial an' damnin' th' denyor, till I wuz so puzzled about whar I stood in th' matter that I denied in the wrong places, an' didn't know whuther I wuz denyin' th' right er th' wrong.

" Now, one day, when I wuz perposin' fer th' twenty-third time, she reminded me in her gentle way that I wuz perfessin' an' denyin' my love fer her all in th' same breath, an' that I wuz uther intoxercated er insane ter expect 'er t' give a sane answer, an' asked me if I ever tried ter walk in two opposite direckshuns at th' same time.

" Wall, that jest staggered me. I couldn't answer at first, but I purty soon sed I had been so scart that I had tried ter run in several direckshuns at once, an' she laughed, an' said she'd like ter see me try it right thar

an' then. But I jest stood as firm as a hole in th' ground, an' my mind wuz jest about as empty. Then she sed I'd better buy a ledger, an' hire a bookkeeper ter keep th' accounts of my perposals, an' separate th' denials from th' denials. But th' more Vasaline denied me th' more I loved 'er. I often think it's th' unattainable things we're apt ter like most. Now, this purty girl Vasaline wuz ferever huntin' th' woods, botanizin'—allus findin' queer flowers, an' diggin' up rare ferns an' mosses, an' transplantin' gnats an' bugs an' lizards, makin' a wildwood of her dooryard an' a wild man of me. I didn't dare ter critercise 'er, fer I'd reached that dervelopment of my courtship whar I didn't know whar I stood, an' didn't want ter risk no chances. She allus asked me ter be her gallant courtier an' do th' dirty work—dig, carry, plant an' prune, till my face an' hands lost their shape an' color, an' my back ached till it almost broke, an' my clothes wuz tore tryin' ter gratify her lofty fancy fer cones hangin' in th' tops of pitch-pine trees; er else pick water-lilies in th' swamp.

“Wall, it happened that I wuz on one of these expedishuns with Vasaline one summer day, an' wuz returnin' through a meader with my arms full of veg'terble an' animal nater, an' wishin' I might drop th' hull of it an' escape, when sudden-like I heerd a noise like a menagerie let loose. I turned round an' thar I see a bull comin' fer us like a train of cars off th' track, tearin' up th' earth, sheddin' steam, an' blowin' fire from his nostrils like coke-ovens in full blast. How he bellered though! Head down an' tail in air! How Vasaline bellered though! an' made fer th' swamp!

“Gents, if it hadn't been fer her confounded obstinacy in w'arin' a red waist, 'stead of a blue one as I

wanted 'er t', we wouldn't 've been merlested. She sed blue would turn my head, an' now red had turned th' bull's head, an' it wuz a 'bad bull,' no gettin' around it.

"There wuz no hole in th' ground, an' no balloon in sight—nothin' but this herd of elerfants dropped from a Siamese jungle, an' so I lit out after Vasaline, an' stuck ter her train like a freight caboosé. But didn't Vasaline slip along though? Never see a girl put so before, ner me, nuther! 'Come fer th' fence!' sez I; but no, she wuz obstinater 'n ever, an' I made up my mind ter stick t' 'er, live er die; an' from th' way that live cyclone chased us, I reckoned he'd made up his mind ter stick us.

"Vasaline went inter th' swamp waist deep, an' I tried ter find 'er footprints in th' mud of time. Say, friends, yer oughter seen that bull. I've heerd tell of a charge of six hunderd, but that stampede of cattle wuz six thousand! I turned white when I see th' bull come plungin' in after us, an' I reckoned he'd gore us next jump, but he didn't budge no more than th' Calaveras frog done when chock full of shot. He lit so close ter us I smelt his garlic breath, an' his bellers most made me deaf. He shook his bristled proboscis, an' panted, an' flapped his tail, an' really Vasaline wuz so frightened at th' bull that she didn't seem ter mind th' mud no how.

"Every moment our hearts an' bodies wuz sinkin' deeper an' deeper, an' I wuz growin' down in th' mouth an' feet, an' one by one my buttons dis'peared, an' our lives wuz grad'ally fadin' from th' world.

"'What a death ter die!' I thought. Ter reflect on bein' buried alive standin' straight up, like them Injin ab'rigines, thar in that awful bog, an' have th' black

mud an' slime ooze an' level over er heads, an' leave no trace of our mysterious departer fer t'other world but th' heap of toads an' gnats an' lizards done up in maidenhair ferns on th' edge of th' swamp—ter think on it wuz undoin' ter my nerves. I must 've thought 'loud, fer Vasaline sudden-like magnified 'er screams, an' begin ter tear 'er hair. I wuz most distracted. Sez I, 'Vasaline, dry yer tears, they're softenin' th' mud an' makin' us sink all th' more faster.' Wall, I thought my time had come, an' wuz bound ter make th' most of it.

" 'Vasaline,' sez I, 'this is my last chance on earth, though it looks as if I'd soon have another chance under th' earth, th' rate we're sinkin'; Vasaline,' sez I, tender-like, 'I love yer fer th' twenty-fourth an' last time, as sure as thar's only twenty-four hours in a day. Before we leave th' world tell me yer love me.'

"She seemed ter be moved—I don't mean 'er body—an' my voice wuz still sinkin' an' gettin' purty faint. 'George,' sez she, sobbin', 'it's no use ter tell me so now, we're losted! Oh, we're losted!'

"Indeed our prospect wuz a black one, both th' mud an' th' futer.

" 'Darlin',' sez I, 'my ownest dear, make my declinin' moments happy an' say yer love me, an' we'll have St. Peter splice us in Heaven.'

" 'I am so sorry,' sez Vasaline, 'but I love yer.'

" 'My delicious Vasaline!' sez I, 'I am transported with joy. Promise ter marry me.'

" 'How kin I?' sez she. 'If some one'd only save us, I'd marry yer ter-morrer.'

" 'I'll save yer, if it's possible,' sez I, an' my hopes riz so sudden-like an' vi'lent they drew me two inches out er th' mud.

“ ‘My beautiful Vasaline,’ I sed, ‘then we’re engaged at last?’

“ ‘At last!’ sez she, ‘but it’s all in me eye!’ An’ she picked a lump of mud from her left peeper thrun thar by th’ bellerin’ bull.

“ ‘Dearest,’ sez I, passionately, ‘then kiss me!’

“ She pursed her purty red lips ter reach mine, but alas! no use; a good-sized zephyr could ’ve flown ’tween our mouths. We couldn’t budge no nearer, nuther. Thar wuz five inches difference ’tween us, as much as we strained ter make it four, an’ I wuz cheated of that mite of earthly, er ruther swampy, bliss.

“ Then she ’peared ter be dis’pointed-like, an’ warmin’ up ter a passion she never showed before, sez she, ‘But, George, dear, we might stick out er tongues an’ exchange opinions.’ ‘A long head yer have, Vasaline,’ sez I. ‘I only wish yern wuz longer so yer could reach mine,’ sez she. Then suitin’ th’ action ter th’ word, we run out er tongues, mine two inches, an’ Vasaline’s three—her’n bein’ a girl wuz natur’ly longer—an’ with grunts an’ strains an’ wiggles an’ sighs we managed ter touch th’ ends—jest touched!—an’ I seemed ter be touched by th’ ‘divine inflate-us,’ fer I sez, ‘How divinely sweet! Vasaline, yer th’ first girl I ever kissed.’ ‘An’ George,’ sez she, ardently, ‘it’s th’ first time I ever stuck out my tongue at any body. It’s only what small childrens do, an’ I’m ’shamed of myself.’

“ Wall, friends, I don’t know whuther ’twas th’ electric fire of that kiss, er what, that sharpened my wits, but sudden an idee illuminated th’ dark cavern of my interlect, an’ I begin ter tear off Vasaline’s red waist. She looked astonished-like, as if she thought me mad. ‘Why, George, dear,’ sez she, ‘yer looney.’

“ ‘No, I hain’t,’ sez I. ‘Gimme yer waist. I’m inspired! Don’t kick, fer Heaven’s sake!’

“ ‘How can I kick?’ sez she, her feet as firm as hitchin’-posts. ‘I’ve nuthin’ under it an’ yer can’t have it!’

“ ‘Thar’s nuthin’ under th’ hole we’re in, nuther,’ sez I frantically. ‘Quick! I want ter throw it behind th’ bull so he’ll turn round an’ give me his tail. It’s a matter of life an’ death.’

“ Then Vasaline caught on—not ter th’ tail but th’ idee—an’ took off ’er waist, an’ I slung it ’most on ter dry ground. Then th’ angry bull begin bellerin’ worse’n ever, an’ tossed ’is proboscis, an’ tried ter turn round, an’ finally did so. My heart leapt with joy, though it wuz now below th’ swamp, an’ Vasaline, she sez, ‘What a *bully* idee!’ an’ she hid ’er embarrassment by wreathin’ herself in smiles. Every time th’ bull planted a foot for’ard he sot a hind hoof back’ard, an’ whipped his tail ter give emphasis ter his motions an’ emotions, an’ finally I caught it an’ hung on like an alligator. He tried ter get at th’ red waist an’ git away from me at the same time, but ‘It’s no go,’ sez I, ‘unless we all go!’ an’ I hung on ter th’ tail fer dear life, an’ Vasaline hung on ter me fer dear me an’ her, an’ almost squoze th’ breath out of my neck, an’ hollered ter me not ter pull th’ tail out of th’ bull, er my arms out of my vertebrates, an’ I tell yer ’twuz a tough pull out of that swamp-hole. But inch by inch we riz an’ th’ bull got nearer th’ waist, an’ thar *wuz* excitement! Blue was no more my color; both of us bet on th’ red. When th’ bull after a time dragged hisself out on ter th’ dry meader, it wuz neck an’ neck ter th’ finish ’twixt Vasaline an’ me—almost a dead heat, I kin tell yer.

“ Wall, sirree, yer’d died if yer’d seen him.



“‘IT’S NO GO,’ SEZ I, ‘UNLESS WE ALL GO!’”

"Th' bull hooked th' waist an' couldn't get it off his horns so he could see, an' he begin plungin' an' bellerin' an' plowin' up th' meader like it wuz spring time, an' started across th' field, an' dashed his brains out agin the stump fence. Then Vasaline an' I went ter th' house of a girl friend, an' borrered some clothes of her an' her brother, an' took a duckin' in th' duck pond, an' went home, an' didn't tell er folks, nuther.

"Wall, I jest want ter tell yer, that purty girl Vasaline an' I wuz spliced in St. Peter's church soon after, though St. Peter didn't 'ficiate in person, an' that swamp jest pulled all th' obstinacy clean out er her. Never seen a sign of it since. Except—yes, she is obstinate in jest one matter, but only one."

"And what may that be?" inquired the Drummer.

"She never would allow me ter tell about th' episode of our engagement, an' made me promise on my honor I'd keep it a 'dark sekert.' This is th' first an' only time I ever telled th' story, an' as I'm a man of honor, I've come within one of keepin' my promise."

"I should say that it is a dark revelation," said the Preacher.

"It is certainly a bully story," declared the Doctor.

"My sensibilities have been severely shocked," observed the widow.

"The case is without precedent," added the Lawyer.

"My admiration and respect for bulls was never before so exalted as at this moment," rejoined the Wall Street "bear," and the Drummer admitted, in conclusion, "that it was the cleverest real-estate deal that he ever heard of."

CHAPTER XXVIII.

LIGHT ON A MYSTERY.

THE Don's story, certainly for the time, made all forget their worriments; but now the laughter having subsided, Hero showed her anxiety of mind by questioning the exploring party in regard to their discoveries.

"My friend," said the Doctor gravely, "I shall not show myself unworthy of your confidence by concealing from you our secret. I feel that I have solved the mystery concerning the condition in which we found this house. There lies in bed up-stairs in a little room leading from the barricaded chamber which we burst open last night, a corpse." (Wild sensation.) "It is the body of a man about fifty, I should say, wasted almost to a skeleton from a fever, and my examination points to the probability that he died early in the night."

"We heard his groans at the time," said the Professor, to the Tragedian aside.

"And we saw his ghost shortly after," returned the "fake," inwardly amused at the recollection of his ghostly, ventriloquistic joke.

"And," resumed the physician, "no doubt realizing his approaching end, the wife went to town for a doctor, or medicine, or a minister of the gospel, and was snow-bound by the blizzard and prevented from returning."

"Perhaps the poor man was a hermit," suggested Hero, sympathetically, "and had nobody to care for him."

"The condition of the house contradicts such a theory," said the Doctor. "The man has not left his bed

for weeks, and that rooster would have starved to death during that time."

"So would the pussy-cat," added the Don. Every body expressed an opinion of his own as to the mystery. But the Doctor's theory prevailed as the most reasonable one. Several, also, said they deplored the fact that they should be mixed up in such a horrible mystery. If the facts should leak out in the nearest town or city, they might be suspected of being implicated in foul play.

"When you think how completely the rooster disappeared," observed Leander, "it cannot be denied that it was fowl play."

"Circumstantial evidence is against us," announced the Lawyer; "why, we have almost ruined the house."

"I shall make it right with the estate," said the banker, "provided we get out of here with our lives."

The ecclesiast appeared to be deeply moved by the uncanny revelation and the mystery attached, and proposed that suitable resolutions be drawn up expressing the condolence of the party in the bereavement of the afflicted family, and thanks for the hospitality which they had conferred upon themselves in their awful extremity.

The suggestion was carried unanimously and the Lawyer proceeded to draw up the resolutions.

Presently the attorney looked up from his writing to mentally frame a new sentence. "Ready fer us ter sign?" asked the Don.

"Not quite."

"How far have you got?" queried the Professor.

The Lawyer took up the sheet and read aloud:

"Now, therefore, we the *under-snowed* desire to express—"

"Very well," interrupted the Professor, "hurry through with it; the Drummer has a pack of cards. We've made up a game of Old Maid and want you to join us."

"Glad th' Lawyer has writ the Res'lushuns *under-snowed*," observed the Don; "reckon we won't have ter sign it, now."

"Certainly you will have to sign," said the Lawyer.

"How kin I when I can't write?"

"Ize in de same box wid Mister Don," added the porter, waking from his lethargy.

"Then you both will have to make your mark."

"It seems to me," observed the Professor, addressing the down-easter, "that you ought to be able to write your name. I suppose you read?"

"Th' papers," the Don replied.

"A pity you do not choose something deeper and more elevating than sensational journalism."

"Wall, I'm purty rushed fer time, yer see, an' ag'in, I give a mite o' study ter arteshtun wells an' windmills on my farm. Like ter know what yer want more deeper an' elervatin' than that."

The Professor was staggered at the Don's undebatable reply, and failing of an answer, changed the subject.

"The game of Old Maid reminds me," said the Journalist, "of a lady friend of mine. Awfully sensitive woman—says women should be called bachelor women—claims once in four years, leap-year, custom ought to make it right and proper for women to propose—just as much a breach of etiquette for a man to propose during that fourth year as for women during the other three years."

"This being leap-year," observed the widow, "your

reference to a change of custom strikes me as being peculiarly personal."

"My dear madam," remarked the Wall Street man, "if all women had your good sense, there would be no bachelors in the world."

"The speculator himself displays not a little sense when he advances such a logical theory," observed the Journalist. "While in several instances girls have shown their want of sense by accepting my offers of marriage, I have, on the other hand, after a short engagement, seen my own folly in ruthlessly throwing my life away, and been lucky enough to bring about a severance of the betrothals."

"Can you advance any practical suggestions as to how my sex may be ameliorated?" inquired Hero half sarcastically, half humorously.

"I can point out to the ladies where the trouble lies," said the newspaper man, "and then perhaps the wanting quality may become instilled in them. In that case they will be able to remedy the evil themselves."

WHY DON'T THE MEN PROPOSE?

A POEM BY THE POET LAUREATE.

"Our girls are taught from morn till night,
Their cleverness is out of sight,
They flower from greenness like the rose,
And wonder why men don't propose.

"They'd purchase titles with their wealth,
Again for gold they'd barter health
And beauty. What?—Lord only knows,
And yet how slow the men propose.

"They listen to their mammas' lectures,
Entertain some vague conjectures,
And consider cons and pros
On wedding men who ne'er propose.

" They learn to dress, to cook, to play
A symphony, or write a lay ;
Whatever fashion suggests goes,
For men are waiting to propose.

" Lo ! Beauty's chaperoned to balls,
To theatres and music-halls
In company with social beaux—
The men least likely to propose.

" Why do you reach for straws, O women,
Like drowning souls unschooled in swimmin' ?
Why will you muster all the foes
Which rout the men who might propose ?

" Oft puritanic innocence
Will put a man ' upon the fence ;'
You, robed in modesty's rare pose,
Will charm him almost to propose.

" Until a grain of sense sometime
Comes to his ear in liquid rhyme
So suddenly he stubs his toes
And falls—in love, *Man won't propose.*"

" That is the best analysis of the cause of the growing proportion of single men and women to the total population that I ever heard," said the widower.

" The literary hack shows a wide range of experience with the fair sex," added the Drummer.

" The Pote Lariat," suggested the Don, " is a studier of human nater. I wish I'd met 'im twenty year ago."

But now the Lawyer having finished the " Resolutions" the paper was passed about to the company, and duly signed, and pinned in a conspicuous place upon the wall.

CHAPTER XXIX.

THE ESCAPE.

THE escape of the trains during the night caused a general depression in the snow market. Several members of the party had left their baggage in the cars, others wished they had done so. Both the Arctic traveler and the Maine man declared they would reach human habitation before evening, come what might, and they now stood in the opened door with the Tragedian, anxiously scanning the horizon for signs of a relief expedition, like the inmates of Noah's Ark must have done the time they watched for the dove's return.

The scudding, drifting snow had obliterated all traces of the railroad bed, with the exception of dangling wires which hung from broken telegraph poles like ropes of whitest cotton.

Everybody was wrapping up, for what purpose no one knew. It might be to climb a mountain or tree, or toboggan on the roof, but certain it was nobody seriously intended to tramp through that snowy wilderness in search of human abode.

"'What say the augurers?'" suddenly called the comedian from the bedclothes.

"'They would not have you to stir forth to-day,
Plucking the entrails of an offering beast,'"

came the Shakespearean response from the door.

At this time the Dude was standing at the sitting-room window in the opposite side of the house, when, espying a dark moving object down the valley, he

shouted hysterically, "Welief! welief!!" All but Leander rushed from the kitchen to his side, in such concert and with such momentum that the first man put a hand through a window-pane, and five others became wedged in the doorway. The keen eye of the Doctor at once disintegrated the object and gave a name to each part. Indeed, there proved to be nothing less beautiful, superb, lovely, magnificent, glorious, entrancing, heavenly, blissful, auspicious, fortunate—(further adjectives omitted for lack of space), than a yoke of oxen drawing a bob-sleigh filled with what appeared to be bags of grain.

At first no driver was distinguishable, but finally he was discovered. He looked like an animated bag of flour, and but for the fact he stood upright no one would have recognized him. He might have been taken for anything or nothing. A white meal-bag enveloped his person from foot to waist, and a woollen tippet was bound over his ears and round his neck so as to almost obscure his face.

"The fellow is crazy venturing to market on such a morning," remarked the Professor.

"I'll be gum if he is!" protested the Don. "He's a Maine man, er I'll eat my earlaps; tell 'im by th' way he holds his gad."

The Drummer eyed the Don with a humorous compression of the lips. Said he, "He's ready for snow one hundred and seventy-five feet deep."

Gradually the ox-team with their burden approached the house. They were tugging slowly and laboriously alongside a ridge of drifted snow which formed, no doubt, the monument to a buried fence.

When they reached a point opposite the doorway about fifty feet from the house, the driver first showed

himself to be a real man by shaking his long ox-goad at the travelers in the door, and calling to his team, "Hoo-o-o-o-oh—back!"

"Helloa, thar, Uncle Rief!—Hay—ay!" the Don shouted. And at once was started an enthusiastic conversation between the farmer and the travelers conspicuous for its bluntness and candor. So eager were the household to obtain their freedom that they made overtures to "Uncle Rief" which caused him to doubt, for a time, their sanity. The Don began by offering to buy all the grain in the sleigh. Then the Lawyer promised fifty cents a bag to pay for dumping the grain in the snow. To say the least, Uncle Rief was astonished at the ruthless prodigality of the inmates of this presumable asylum.

The Drummer offered him a pair of corsets for a birthday present to his wife, taking it for granted that he must possess one to urge him to town in such weather; the banker next agreed to pay \$300 for the rig and \$100 additional for the transfer of the party to the nearest railroad station, wherever that might be. Uncle Rief was speechless. Being himself a speculator, he did some speculating before venturing a reply. He recognized the helplessness of the "lunatics" and resolved to take advantage of them in strict accord with human nature.

"This 'ere barley goes ter a brewer w'at's bo't th' hull harvest," he said, at length, gaining command of his tongue, "and I can't disappoint him."

"I'll buy your barn and all the grain and mice in it," yelled the Doctor.

"And pay cash down," added the actor.

"I'll go him one better," shouted the Drummer, "I'll buy your farm and pay cash on delivery, provided

you deliver it at the Hub in ten days in good condition."

"Th' hub!" ejaculated the countryman; "bob-sleighs hain't got no wheels; 'nd my land don't float till th' spring freshets."

It was no time to joke. The anxious travelers were becoming exasperated, and were on the point of way-laying the obdurate hayseed and forcibly taking command of his docile team when the banker made a proposition which proved to be acceptable. He agreed to pay the farmer's price for his rig and its contents, and afterward to give everything back to him, if he would dump the grain in the snow and carry the belated party to a railroad station without further debate. Uncle Rief questioned the responsibility of the bargainer, much to the surprise of the latter. He was, however, at once satisfied on the point in question as a dozen voices guaranteed the good faith, financial credit and moral responsibility of the gentleman, without mentioning that he was a professional Wall Street operator.

"That's a go!" called Uncle Rief, who began to untie the grain-bags. The Drummer offered three cheers, and then all made ready for the departure.

Meanwhile Leander, who had availed himself of the opportunity offered by his temporary isolation to don his own possessions which had dried by the stove during the night, felt of his shrunken trousers, and de-claimed in tones of doubtful satisfaction:

"Look, how well my garments sit upon me;
Much fealer than before."

And now Hero was allowed the privacy of the sitting-room closet in which to resume her own feminine cos-

tume. In fifteen minutes the travelers were ready for the start; so was Uncle Rief.

Suddenly, the Tragedian announced in tones which scraped off the wall paper:

“ ‘First from the park let us conduct them thither;
Then, homeward every man attack the hand
Of his fair mistress; in the afternoon
We will with some strange pastime solace them;
Such as the shortness of the time can shape;
For revels, dances, masks, and merry hours,
Forerun fair love, strewing her way with flowers.’ ”

And Leander responded in words equally penetrating to ears and knot-holes:

“ ‘Away, away! no time shall be omitted,
That will be time, and may by us be fitted.’ ”

At once was heard the voice of the end-man in the end of the bob-sleigh.

“Yer will have ter come ter me,” he shouted across the snow. “Can’t leave th’ road, naw sirree.” The party went.

Of course the first individual to reach the bob was the Journalist. He immediately began to put himself on good terms with the nervy farmer by remarking, “We’ve had a large snow-storm, Uncle Rief.” “Have eh!” replied the wide-awake farmer, dryly. “Thought wuz hoar frost.” The newspaper man became tongue-tied.

Contrary to the farmer’s advice the party did not take a lunch with them, for the recollection of the late meal, especially the corn-meal, was more than sufficient to satisfy their hunger for a whole day and more.

First, upon arriving at the bob-sleigh, Uncle Rief tossed each member a grain-bag to stick his legs in, for

though the wind had died during the early morning the air was still biting, and the rag carpet which had been pillaged from the house to answer the office of wrapping-rugs would alone hardly suffice to protect the travelers from the cold. This use of the bags was certainly an ingenious idea. Even Hero did not fail to appreciate its worth. She gracefully wrapped her skirts round her limbs, and pulled on a bag as did her male companions, and tied it round her waist, which not all the others could do, while a half-dozen love-sick men fell over each other in their rivalry to make her comfortable. The widower scored a point by having secured the "eeder down piller" which he now placed at Hero's back, and the Lawyer ran a close second in the amatory race by wrapping the widow in a large crazy-quilt, until she looked more like an Indian squaw than herself.

The bottom of the bob-box was lined with hay, which together with the carpet widths laid upon it made a comfortable seat. Other bedclothes, including the straw-mattress, taken from the abandoned house, were used for robes. When everybody was snugly tucked in the crowded sleigh, Uncle Rief climbed in, poked the beasts and yelled "G'long!" and the merry travelers began to experience the novel sensation of sleighing with an ox-team in the heart of a mountain wilderness under perhaps the most original auspices probable.

Several times the oxen stuck fast in the huge drifts that often impeded their slow and labored progress, on which occasions Uncle Rief was required to get out of the sleigh, at times fall out, and dislodge them with a spade brought along for the emergency.

Once the cattle strayed from the hidden road, and managed to get a stone-wall or stump-fence between them, and it cost a half-hour's delay and the combined

strength and wit of the party to separate the animate from the inanimate. Again in passing over a little bridge which crossed a brook in the road the sleigh was overturned and all the party were pitched into the snow. Considerable excitement was manifested on this occasion. The Dude became lost. He was, however, soon found buried under the righted sleigh. The jar of his fall in the snow naturally resulted in a severe shock to his fragile head, but he was, in time, fully revived and safely tucked in a corner of the sleigh, where the wind could not blow him out.

I have not mentioned that the porter, for the comfort of the rest, rode astride the oxen, changing now and then from one to the other in order to keep warm. He was a good rider, as most darkies are, and kept his seat beautifully except in one instance, when he gracefully left it. Then the cattle were disentangled from the hedge-fence and the porter was enabled to resume his seat. He thought it a good joke, and laughed when he heard the Don laugh, and entertained the company with reminiscences of chicken and watermelon hunting in "de sunny Souf."

A pail of weak coffee, a small bag of tobacco of an unknown variety, and a snow-ball were the only stimulants to be had, unless the stories told by the Don and the Drummer filled such offices.

While the Tragedian's meerschaum and the farmer's corn-cob were passed around to the smokers, the storytellers let loose their tongues in a fashion to bring tears of laughter to one and all. The mercury had risen to ten degrees above zero, but the hopes of the rescued travelers were much higher. Doubtful compliments were occasionally made upon the personal appearance of certain members of the party.

Uncle Rief looked as though he had a frightful combination of chicken pox, hay fever and several other *rural* diseases in an aggravated form.

It was a notable fact that nobody hazarded an attempt to discuss the weather more than to make a brief reference to the beauties of the landscape, which the Don argued would be more properly called the land *escape*, there being no land to be scene. The Poet was very rash on one occasion. He started to recite an original poem on the "Beautiful Snow," but he had not finished the first stanza—

"The snow is falling. Flake on flake
The glittering crystals dancing make
A bed of purest white ;
They leap, they fall, on tree and wall,
And tread so still"—

when, suddenly, his mouth was plugged with a snow-ball, his teeth bent, the inspiration broken and he bodily ejected from the sleigh. Then peace reigned again.

Though the mountains looked grand and imposing in their limitless vestments of peerless snow, when the roofs and the chimneys of distant habitations loomed into view the scene became picturesque beyond one's power to describe. The party escaped from their snow-bound prison at eleven; it was now five in the evening. The six hours had seemed to be the length of an Arctic day. In twenty minutes more they expected to be blissfully thawing out before a rousing Pokerville fire. They would own the town.

To begin with, the generous banker proposed to rent, or buy outright, a hotel or house, and his fellows agreed upon a jack-pot in which all should "chip in"

for the purpose of stocking and heating it; then all, including Uncle Rief, if he so liked, would just revel in luxury, and eat, and sleep, and stick their feet in the stove, and imbibe hot drinks, and go into the garret or cellar and yell to their hearts' content. Yes, it would be a holiday, and all Pokerville must do them homage.

At a quarter after five the first house was passed. Suddenly interrupting the jollity and conversation, the comedian signaled the "taking of Pokerville" with the lines:

"The West yet glimmers with some streaks of day:
Now spurs the 'lated traveler apace
To gain the timely inn; and near approaches
The subject of our watch."

Immediately a series of hearty cheers congested the frosty air, and, shortly following, the Don, believing he discerned an American flag frozen to its staff before a village shop, cheered vigorously and alone, "Hooray fer th' 'Stars and Stripes,' hooray! hooray!! hooray!!!"

"That isn't a flag," corrected the Lawyer, amused; "it's simply a barber's pole that you see, painted red, white and blue."

"Ibedam!" exclaimed the down-easter in astonishment, "who'd 've thought it! I've been so long in the Arctic regions I don't know a barber's pole from th' North Pole."

The ecclesiast, for the first, championed the Don. Said he, "I admire the man's patriotism, if not his morals. 'To an American the Stars and Stripes should be as much in his religion as the Sermon on the Mount.'"

The sledging journey at last was at an end. As the ox-team came to a stop in front of the quaint old country tavern the company gave another round of cheers, this time for the unknown proprietor, and the Tragedian, rising, said dramatically:

“ ‘Good friends, go in, and taste some wine with me,
And we, like friends, will straightway go together.’ ”

At once all began to crawl out of the grain-bags, much to the consternation of the three freaks who came out of the tavern to ascertain the cause of so much life in the place.

Then the tavern door opened, and there was a mighty exodus. The postmaster, the lawyer, the grocer, the hardware merchant, the justice of the peace, the butcher, and everybody of consequence in town came forward and extended a cordial welcome to the surprise party. But as all the above named were united in the person of one big man, the tavern-keeper, “ they ” had more than “ their ” hands full.

With two exceptions, the travelers were in prime condition. The banker and the Dude—poor fellows!—each had a hand nearly frozen off. Why, for three hours had the smitten widower held the idiot’s bare hand in his with all the bliss attending ignorance, believing it belonged to Hero, so small and dainty was it. And when he saw the charming widow hanging with both arms on to the sleigh-rigging while the Lawyer drew off her traveling-bag, his surprise and embarrassment attracted the attention of the Journalist, who immediately got out an “ extra ” about it. Needless to say, it half paralyzed the party. The broker explained that it was only a joke he had played, and tried to buy up the “ issue ” by engaging all the spare rooms in the

tavern, and ordering stoves and fireplaces to be heaped with all the coal in town, in bins or in mines, and calling for champagne, which the keeper never heard of, and ordering dinner and doing himself handsomely. Meanwhile the amused Drummer ordered a pail of ice-water to be brought to the widower and the idiot for them to bathe their frozen hands in.

The widower laughed good naturedly, and called in Uncle Rief to make him a nabob by giving him back his bob, which he had not yet paid for, and invited him to join the party at dinner.

Judging from the red faces of the diners, it was a strawberry festival out of season. They joked, and laughed, and told yarns (true stories, of course), and watched the cheerful blaze of the fire, and occasionally stuck their hands in the flames for fun, and recounted their wonderful adventures and their merciful deliverance from their Siberian-like banishment through the providential offices of the farmer, until the latter's eyes nearly popped out of their sockets. Uncle Rief mutely looked on, marveling at the extravagance of "them city millionaires," and picturing the small fortune soon to be thrust upon him by the capitalist.

Suddenly, the porter, who had been dispatched to the railroad station, entered and announced good news. He said the station agent had telegraphed to Scranton, —fortunately the wires for this distance had been that day repaired,—and explained the predicament of "the railroad director and his private party," and had received the reply that a postal-car would be fitted up and sent by a special engine to carry them to Scranton before midnight.

No wonder the inn-keeper and the farmer thought that, with such credit to back him, the banker was



"ALL BEGAN TO CRAWL OUT OF THE GRAIN-BAGS."

worthy of their trust. The proprietor now was more than ever lavish in his blessings and pronounced in his hospitality, expecting in the end a bag of gold as his reward.

"Eight o'clock!" exclaimed the Professor, finally, interrupting the chatter.

"So, call the field to rest : and let's away,
To part the glories of this happy day,"

added the comedian, rising from the table and sitting on Uncle Rief's lap. His condition had required too much of stimulants.

"Leander, I am shocked," said Hero.

"So am I," was Uncle Rief's ambiguous remark. And the Tragedian added humorously :

"Only for praise : and praise we may afford
To any lady that subdues a lord."

"One drunkard loves (hic) another of the name,"

returned Leander.

"We must be going," said the banker, and he called for his bill. "Very moderate," added he ; "I'll double it!" And, thrusting his hand into his pocket for the fifty dollars, he addressed the farmer, "I owe you four hundred."

Uncle Rief, in his impetuosity, reached out his hand for the amount. The Wall Streeter withdrew his empty hand from his pocket in abject bewilderment.

"Well!" he ejaculated, the word rhyming with another in his thoughts.

"What's up?" queried the Preacher.

"No money!" said the capitalist, still going through his pockets with lightning rapidity. "Must have lost it in the exchange of clothes last night in the dark."

"The exchange would be the most *natural* place to lose it," observed the Lawyer; "guess I can help you out though."

"Hard luck!" commented the Doctor. "Perhaps I can also help you; I brought my check book with me."

Everybody was hunting for his money, but, astonishing to say, with the same distressing result.

"Not a d—— cent on me!" was the comedian's expressive exclamation. His brother player was equally furious.

"What! can the devil speak true?"

quoted he.

"The thane of Cawdor lives; why do you dress me
In borrowed robes?"

the comedian answered.

"But 'tis strange:
And oftentimes, to win us to our harm,
The instruments of darkness tell us truths;
Win us with honest trifles, to betray us
In deepest consequence."

The only person in the sledging party who could produce a dollar was Uncle Rief. He now suspected a preconcerted fraud perpetrated upon him and the tavern-keeper, both of whom knew one another to be above suspicion, and secretly condemned the practice of doing business on trust.

"Even my check book is gone!" exclaimed the Doctor.

"And mine," added the banker and divine in concert.

Everybody tried to take matters philosophically. Had not the robbery been universal, or ostensibly so,

the individual losses would have been harder to bear. As it was, the light and jovial spirits which had characterized the party, one and all, had suddenly departed. That they had been robbed by one of their number during the night in the dark house, none of them doubted. One of their number must have been a professional pickpocket to have accomplished such a thorough robbery. Few comments, however, were made about it, though the countenances of all answered as mirrors to the thoughts hidden behind them.

“‘Fate show thy force : ourselves we do not owe ;
What is decreed, must be : and be this so,’”

quoted Leander, with Bohemian-like philosophy.

“Well, friend,” responded the Drummer, “you may call it fate, but it’s a nasty box to be in.” And to the banker, who arose, “Are you off?”

“I am. If Uncle Rief will carry us in his bob-sleigh to the station, and the kind proprietor will accompany us, I will identify myself as a director of the Railroad and justify them in taking my notes for the bills due them.”

The farmer eyed the railroad director incredulously, and the tavern-keeper hemmed, and hawed, and watched the face of his prudent wife for a sign of her approval. But now Leander arose, this time more successfully than before, and declaiming:

“‘St. Cupid then ! and soldiers to the field !’”

initiated the preparation for the departure.

The journey to the station was slow in more ways than one. On their arrival the party found the relief train waiting. Fortunately, the conductor recognized the director, and thus was avoided the necessity of another delay in telegraphing. Both of the creditors

appeared to be satisfied with the tendered notes of the banker, and resolved themselves into a trust committee of two to convey another liberal note to the owners of the pillaged snow-bound house—the late asylum of the travelers.

Then the company boarded the car, the engine whistled, and amid cheers for the hospitable townspeople, and the exclamation of the Tragedian,

“‘Away, my friends! New flight;
And happy newness, that intends old right!’”

the special train moved out of Pokerville on its journey to Scranton.

The postal-car, which had been sidetracked by reason of late damage, had been fitted up as comfortably as could be expected on such short notice. Two long benches had been loaned by the station master at Scranton, the car was well heated, and a lunch of coffee and sandwiches had been provided. And how the party relished this treat! When they had finished, no baskets of fragments could have been gathered. Then the Drummer was reminded of a certain story, and the others wanted to hear it, and the Don “reck’lected” another, and the widower still another, and the time passed as rapidly as the train sped.

And there was no let-up around the bends. On one occasion the Don and Professor were pitched from their seats by the swinging of the reckless car. When the Don recovered his equilibrium, he glanced at the walls of the car, lined with letter-boxes, and remarked humorously: “Reckon them pigeon-holes er meant fer us ter git inter.”

Meanwhile the Wall Street man, the Lawyer, the Journalist and the comedian, the widow’s most ardent

devotees, were endeavoring to outrival each other in hero worship.

"Are you practicing in New York?" the broker inquired of the attorney.

"No, in Philadelphia. I was for two years a member of the New York bar, but I had to compete with so many unscrupulous lawyers that I removed to the Quaker City, where, I am happy to say, I achieved success beyond my anticipation. The Quakers, as we know, are slow; and I, being a New Yorker, was naturally fast. Hence my success."

"You wrote your name D-o-u-g-h in the Resolutions," observed the Journalist; "very uncommon name."

"Once knew folks in th' West by that name; purty lively stock," added the Don.

"But my family came originally from the *East*," emphasized the Lawyer.

"The yeast?" interrogated the comedian; "that accounts for your rise."

The Lawyer, the Wall Street man and the Drummer were discussing the game of baseball and the relative merits of the several leading nines, when suddenly the Doctor broke in enthusiastically: "I denounce the game—altogether too violent—have given much study to the muscular system—Myology, in fact, is a sort of hobby of mine."

"By the way, Doc," remarked the amiable Lawyer with a chuckle, "your mention of Myology recalls to mind a very curious circumstance which once happened to My Dog."

"Oh, you have a dog, too, eh? You ought to see *my* Irish-setter. But first let's hear about your dog. I am fond of dogs," said the Doctor.

CHAPTER XXX.

MY DOG.

A STORY BY THE LAWYER.

"My Dog," began the Lawyer, "was a Chinese-poodle. The circumstances happened in a little jay town out in the Hoosier State, where I was visiting a grand-aunt suffering from lumbago.

"There was a maiden lady in Jayville, of various ages, a Miss Pupp, and she owned the most curious of dogs. It was presented to her by a friend who had just returned from a trip round the world. People thought it a strange coincidence that a woman with such a curious name should have such a significant pet, and *vice versa*. She was the homeliest woman I ever saw, but she had plenty of money, and it was current report that several attempts had been made to induce her to change her name. She wouldn't have it. She owned her house, and her new pet made her more than ever contented with her *lot*.



MY DOG.

" Now, the dog went several weeks without a name. Miss Pupp couldn't decide upon a suitable appellation for it. The dog was an odd pet and deserved an odd name. A botanist in town tried to name it and failed. Miss Pupp sent a photograph of the dog to a professor of astronomy in a neighboring seminary, but the names he submitted were altogether too lofty for the brute creation. In the meantime Miss Pupp simply called the dog 'my dog,' spoke of it as 'my dog,' and wrote of it as 'my dog.'

" One day she put an end to the vexatious question by toting the poodle to a jeweler's, where she had the words 'My Dog' engraven on its silver collar. Then she said triumphantly, 'That is odd enough, sure.' The christening of My Dog was the leading topic of newspaper editorials and social gossip in all circles, and even the farmers who came into town sat on cracker barrels about the stoves in the grocery stores, and discussed it.

" At this season the Methodists were getting up a church fair, and the preacher suggested that the dog and its pupp, or rather Miss Pupp and her dog (he blushed at his *lapsus linguæ*) would be a drawing card. He was right. Miss Pupp and her pet were on exhibition. Admission to the fair was fifteen cents, and \$30 were raised, enough to pay for the preacher's new hall carpet. Next day Miss Pupp went shopping with her Chinese-poodle and returned home without it. How she and her dog managed to lose one another was beyond her comprehension. She set out at once in search of it, and while the half-crazed woman was hunting the town high and low, My Dog was undergoing some singularly noteworthy experiences in marketing.

" He craved a bone. A snip of a cur had recently

passed him with a bone in his mouth, and that made him envious, naturally. When I see another man eating peanuts, or smoking a good cigar, then is the very time my appetite asserts itself more than at any other. It happened that a policeman, who hadn't made an arrest for a month, saw the dog and nabbed it. The Hibernian had never before arrested a dog, and he didn't know what to do with it. He never thought to examine its silver collar. The dogs of the town didn't generally wear such things as collars, and in many instances men didn't, either. The jail was for people only, and the town contained no dog-pound.

"' Oi'll take the purp to the mayor,' said the cop, delighted with such a plausible pretext to speak with his Excellency. Now, the mayor detested dogs, and he was astonished at the policeman's unusual errand. But there was a vein of humor running through him. He recognized the dog at a glance.

"' 'Why,' said the mayor, feigning surprise, 'it's My Dog; where did you find him?'

"' 'Sure, an' the foine little crathur was indivorin' to stale a bone from Michael O'Doone's butcher shop whin I arristed 'im. A divil o' knowledge Oi had it was yurren. Oi ask yez pardon, sirrah.'

"' 'Granted,' said the mayor. 'But the dog has no right to steal, if it is My Dog. You must take him before Judge Blood at the court house and have justice done.'

"' The policeman was astonished to find that mayors were men of such immaculate conscience, and after a moment's hesitation departed with the dog.

"' 'We allow no dogs in court,' said the bailiff to the policeman as he entered the court-room.

“ ‘But,’ says Pat, ‘Oi have an important missage from th’ mayor for his Honor, the joodge.’

“ The bailiff whispered to the court and the court ordered Pat to the bar.

“ ‘Well!’ ejaculated the cross judge, in the midst of the district attorney’s cross-examination. The policeman saluted and dropped the Chinese-poodle in the judge’s inkwell.

“ ‘It’s th’ mayor’s dog Oi’ve brought yez, yer Honor. Oi nabbed the crathur in the act of stalin’ a porruk, and, yer Honor, the mayor insists thet I fetch th’ coolprit before yez for justice.’

“ The judge called out, ‘The court is adjourned for five minutes.’ Then of the policeman he inquired sternly, ‘Did the mayor send you to me?’

“ ‘Begorra, an’ that he did, yer Honor.’

“ ‘And did he say this was his dog?’

“ ‘Faith, an’ he did, yer Honor; an’ phwat’s more, sez he, it shouldn’t stale if it is Moi Dog.’

“ The judge looked over the tops of his spectacles and examined the dog’s collar.

“ ‘But,’ said he, ‘the mayor is mistaken, it is My Dog.’ And the court petted the poodle affectionately. Pat looked confused. He didn’t know whom to believe, the mayor or the judge. He looked about uneasily.

“ ‘You may carry My Dog to the sheriff, and ask him to take charge of him till court adjourns,’ said the judge, handing the itinerant pet to the policeman. The sheriff was in his office in the adjoining building. Pat entered with his charge, and repeated his story, and delivered the order of the court.

“ ‘Take charge of his dog till court is over!’ exclaimed the sheriff. ‘I don’t know that it is my duty to take care of the judge’s dog;’ but after a moment’s

reflection he added, 'The judge and I are warm friends, and it's a cute little dog; well, leave it with me;' and the sheriff smoothed the poodle's spotted coat.

" 'Hold on, Pat,' he suddenly shouted, 'this is not the judge's dog at all. Who said it was?'

" 'Faith, an' his Honor, the joodge,' said Pat, blinking nervously. He felt that he had already made a bad mess of it in his humble attempt to uphold the law.

" 'But the "joodge" doesn't know what he's talking about. This is My Dog, and no mistake about it.' The sheriff was of a savage mien, used to ferreting out white caps and highway robbers, and Pat beheld his chief with much awe.

" 'Take the dog to my house,' said the sheriff, 'and leave it with my wife.'

" Mrs. Sheriff was entertaining a fashionable caller, when Pat was suddenly ushered into the front hall with an armful of dog. The garrulous Irishman explained his errand in grandiose style, and, when he was asked where the sheriff got the dog, graphically related the dog's checkered experiences. The ladies were amused.

" 'I just love dogs,' said the fashionable caller, 'let me hold him a moment.'

" Pat dropped the nonplussed canine into the lady's lap. The dog looked as though it hoped to find its mother-in-law before long.

" 'Why,' said she, 'I am surprised the sheriff should send this dog to his wife. It's not his dog at all, it's My Dog. Aren't you, deary?' and the dog licked her cheek voraciously. Pat's eyes nearly popped out.

" 'Faith an' yez ladies must foight it out aming yerselves,' said Pat. 'Oi'm afther taking paples' worrud, an' Oi belave yez.'

“ ‘You must go at once,’ said Mrs. Sheriff to Pat, ‘and tell my husband that Mrs. Matthews says it is her dog.’

“ Pat departed and delivered the message to the sheriff, the sheriff dispatched him to the judge, and the judge sent him to the mayor.

“ ‘I thought it was My Dog,’ said the sheriff.

“ ‘I would have sworn it was My Dog,’ said the judge.

“ ‘I am sorry, Pat,’ said the mayor, ‘that I have caused you so many unnecessary steps when you might have been sleeping on post. I was sure the dog was My Dog. I don’t see how I could have been so mistaken.’

“ Pat saluted and departed, delighted at having met so many ‘foine pable.’ But, just as he left the mayor’s office, a strange-looking woman came running up to him with the curious dog in her arms, closely followed by the fashionable lady in whose possession he last saw the animal.

“ ‘This woman says this dog is hers,’ said the fashionable lady, excitedly.

“ ‘She stole My Dog from my very arms,’ said the other.

“ Pat was thunderstruck. ‘Sure an’ Oi’m afther havin’ justice done onny-way. Come wid me, ladies. The joodge must settle the diffikilty;’ and Pat soon stood for the third time before the solemn majesty of the court.

“ When the judge saw the Hibernian approaching him with the dog he smiled, but on looking over his spectacles, another spectacle, or rather a pair, confronted him which caused him to look grave. He recognized the ladies, and adjourned the court for ten minutes out of deference. The policeman was first to speak.

“ ‘ Oi’m afther spakin’ wid yer Honor,’ said Pat saluting.

“ ‘ I am hearing,’ said the court.

“ ‘ Missus Matthews was paceable strollin’ the sthrate wid her purp, when the lady wid the skunk-skin coat hed th’ impedince to stale it out of ’er arrums, an’ Oi thought yer Honor could settle the mather an’ fix th’ alimony bether than Oi.’

“ The judge was annoyed to have himself appear so ridiculous before a room full of eminent lawyers and citizens who had been attracted by an important case. He remembered, too, that his wife harbored a secret dislike for Miss Pupp, and was not on friendly terms with the fashionable Mrs. Matthews, who thought herself better than anybody else in town, and it happened, also, that only the insolence of such a common woman in snatching the dog from her arms had induced Mrs. Matthews to make Miss Pupp trouble by complaining to the police. She never dreamed of being forced into court. She looked abashed at her unfashionable predicament, and now, her ire aroused, she had the spunk to stick up for her rights.

“ ‘ Whose dog is this ? ’ the judge inquired.

“ ‘ My Dog,’ said both women, in concert.

“ ‘ There seems to be a difference of opinion,’ said the judge kindly. ‘ Let me take the dog, Muldoon.’

“ Pat gave the dog another sitz-bath—this time in red ink—while the judge opened a ponderous law book and glanced at it upside down—the book, not the judge. Then he said, with affected gravity, throwing back his head and looking through his specs on the end of his nose, ‘ Ladies, the law in the case seems to indicate that this is a case of “ seised in possession.” ’

“ ‘ Exactly, judge,’ said the fashionable lady, emphatically.

“ ‘ But haven’t I right to seize what’s mine ? ’ added the woman in skunk-fur.

“ ‘ You don’t exactly comprehend the law,’ said his Honor. ‘ But let me ask—you say this is your dog ? ’ The judge looked at Miss Pupp.

“ ‘ I do,’ said she.

“ ‘ Have you paid the dog tax ? ’

“ ‘ No, sir; didn’t know there was any dog tax to be paid.’

“ ‘ Equity, madam, does not excuse ignorance of the law. Ahem!!!’ The court cleared his throat as loudly as a bailiff would clear the court-room. Then he beckoned to the town assessor, who stood in the rear end of the room, and slyly slipped a dollar bill into his hand and wrote out a *brief*—‘ My Dog tax.’ Then he resumed his questioning, addressing the lady of fashion :

“ ‘ You claim this dog ? ’

“ ‘ It is My Dog,’ was the ambiguous reply.

“ ‘ And have *you* paid the dog tax ? ’

“ ‘ I have not,’ said the lady laconically.

“ ‘ I don’t see,’ said the court, ‘ how either of you can support your claim to ownership of the dog, when you failed to pay the dog tax. I hardly know what to do about the case,’—and the court looked an appeal to the police department to help him out of his dilemma.

“ ‘ Plaze, yer Honor,’ said Pat, saluting, ‘ if yez will cut the dom cur in two loike the babe in the Shcriptur, p’raps yez kin solve the diffikilty.’

“ ‘ It is beneath the dignity of the court to turn the room into a sausage factory,’ said the judge sternly. Then a happy thought struck him. ‘ I am sorry to have to say that the dog is My Dog, ladies. I base my



"LET ME TAKE THE DOG, MULDOON."

claim on two facts and an old maxim. It says on the dog's collar it is My Dog; I, myself, paid the dog tax, and, as for the maxim, " Possession is nine points of the Law."

" The ladies eyed the court incredulously. The judge then turned to the assessor and inquired, ' Have I paid the dog tax on this dog ? '

" ' You have, your Honor, and more promptly than anybody in town.'

" ' The court decides, ladies, that the dog is My Dog,' pronounced the judge. ' You are discharged without costs.'

" The judge handed Pat the poodle and ordered him to take it to his house. The Emerald-Islander had just learned for the first time how it happened that the dog had so many owners, and as he looked again at the collar he almost shook to pieces.

" ' Shure, an' it's a rich joke, indade, an' Oi'm thempted to risk ownin' th' dog meself. Begorra, it's Moi Dog, fer the epitapt on th' collar rades Moi Dog,' and Pat fairly howled with merriment. But just at that moment a friend—"

" See here, my loquacious narrator," interrupted the Doctor, " that dog has had enough owners. Finish the story before we reach the station."

" But—"

" Wind up, man," attested the Don laughing. " Give th' dog a rest, he must be tired."

" Well," said the Lawyer, annoyed that the dog should be cheated of a dozen or more owners, " the dog finally got into the judge's hands again, and barked so loudly that he couldn't sleep a wink all night long. He decided to return it to the original owner without delay.

“ ‘My dear madam,’ said he, ‘let me present you with My Dog. I cannot bear the *tax* any longer.’ ”

“ The grateful lady fell on his neck completely overcome, and hugged him so tightly that he was almost overcome, too. He finally escaped amidst a shower of blessings.

“ That case of My Dog made the judge famous. He lived to a good old age, and after the judge died the town erected to his memory a fine monument, surmounted by a statue of him in street garb, bearing this epitaph:

‘AS A JURIST.

THE ABLEST JUDGE THAT EVER SAT,
WHO READETH THIS TAKE OFF HIS HAT.’

“ But the curious woman who owned the curious dog outlived the judge. A crowd of citizens one day gathered about the monument in the public square, attracted by an inscription thereon which they had not noticed before. It had been sculptured by an unknown hand, but they congratulated themselves that it was not at the public expense. It read:

‘AS A LAWYER.

LIFE VS. DEATH.

Never a single case lost he
Than this—a sad rehearsal:
In life he won “My D-O-G,”
But death brought a reversal.’ ”

As the Lawyer concluded his story the engine whistled, the car slowed down, and the belated travelers wheeled into the Scranton station. There the station agent received them, and helped them into the sleigh awaiting them, and then, in accordance with

instructions, he proceeded to hunt up their lost baggage which had been left in the trains the previous evening.

Scranton was Hero's home, and her brother-in-law was there to meet her. With this exception, the original party repaired at once to the hotel where the agent had engaged rooms, and where they indulged in a round of refreshing drinks to suit their various and individual tastes.

"Look, he's winding up the watch of his wit, by and by it will strike,"

said the "jolly" comedian, eyeing his partner; and immediately the clock struck twelve. It was a signal to retire. Several arose. Said the Tragedian to the tipsy actor,

"Taste your legs, sir, put them to motion."

"My legs do better understand me, sir, than I do understand what you mean by bidding me taste my legs."

"I mean, to go, sir, to enter."

"I will answer you with gait and entrance.
But we are prevented,"

concluded Leander, who entertained a false idea of the impediment to his leave-taking, and without further debate the "dry actor" and the Drummer shook hands around, and taking Leander by the arms led him to his room.

CHAPTER XXXI.

A HOUSEWARMING IN CIVILIZATION.

WEDNESDAY, March 14, found our party of belated travelers still "killing time" in Scranton, and with three exceptions they showed no great anxiety to get away. The snow continued to hold the city in what might be called a state of siege. All the railroads remained blocked. A short line to Wilkesbarre was promised by the railway officials to be cleared by Thursday morning so that by a roundabout route over a branch of the Pennsylvania line those eastbound might reach Philadelphia Thursday night and New York Friday morning.

The hotels were full, some of the guests were, too. With cards, billiards, pool, coasting, sleighing, storytelling and secret interviews with the chief of a local detective bureau the men found plenty to occupy their time. A few slept until lunch.

After lunch a merry sleigh-load, consisting of the original party, excepting the porter who had reported for duty upon his arrival and had not been seen since, and two new members, the sister and brother-in-law of Hero, was successfully engineered by the Wall Street banker-broker-railroad director-widower, and so happy and comfortable were all on this occasion that the Poet, be it said, was allowed to finish his poem on "Beautiful Snow" without risking his *own* life.

This jolly sleigh-ride only cemented friendships stronger than ever. Nobody wished to believe it possible there was one among their number traveling in false guise.

The lost baggage left in the trains that met in the blizzard had been recovered. There was a redeeming consolation in that. But I must not be late at Hero's housewarming Wednesday evening. She promised on this occasion to serve a collation prepared entirely by her own hands, arguing that the "house-party" of Monday night, she feared, had placed her in a false light with her companions, and she desired to thoroughly exonerate herself. She had looked a fright; she had made a failure with the breakfast; she had suited herself to circumstances which to look back upon now seemed unreasonable and impossible.

The guests were expected at eight o'clock sharp, but the first arrival was announced a half-hour earlier. Hero recognized the Drummer's humorous cough. Rising and greeting him cordially, she led him to the fire and bade him give an account of himself and fellows and the news, if any, concerning the mysterious robbery.

"What a funny question to ask you!" she added, laughing and blushing.

"Yes, ha—ha—he—he!" chuckled the Drummer, "'tis funny. Who knows but I am the culprit? Saw a detective to-day—told him to watch me."

Hero laughed, "How perfectly absurd!"

"But I declare," returned the jovial commercial traveler, "I don't know whom else in the party to suspect."

At this moment the door-bell rang and Hero advanced to receive guest number two.

"How to do?" she said bewitchingly.

"Oh—I do," answered the widower with a sober glance at the Bostonian, who sat blissfully toasting his feet by the blazing grate.

The banker had expected to be the first to arrive, and

was disappointed in being cheated of a pleasant tête-à-tête with his enamorata by a disinterested married man, who probably had a sweetheart in every city but Scranton and persisted in hoodooing the party, individually as well as collectively.

"Well!" ejaculated the banker, rubbing his hands as if he were washing them with soap-suds. "I thought you were going to the station for information concerning to-morrow's trains. The boys are waiting for you at the hotel."

The Drummer raised his eyebrows at the flirting flames of the fire and replied with affected seriousness, "I went to the station all right, but was detained, and, thinking you all had gone off without me, I hurried here direct. How happens it you came so early?"—and he winked humorously at Hero. "I thought we were all coming together." Here the sound of voices and stamping of feet outside announced the arrival of the main party, and Hero, noting the widower's embarrassment, answered for him, "You all will come together directly," and greeted the guests.

All appeared to be in the best of spirits. The house was brilliantly illuminated, and its tasteful furnishings paid a pleasing tribute to the culture and refinement of the lovely young woman, who in a most embarrassing extremity had of late conducted herself so bravely, sensibly and becomingly. Her brother-in-law, Mr. Willow, and his admirable wife *bent* all their thoughts and energies to assist the hostess in entertaining the gallant men to whom she owed so much. Hero played and sang, as did, also, her sister, and after a sweet duet by the ladies, the Doctor was requested to furnish a little original music for the benefit of the Willows by re-telling the story of the Polar Canaries.

Then came humorous recitations by the Drummer and Lawyer; and sleight-of-hand tricks by one who afterward feared lest he had thereby aroused suspicions of his being the mysterious pickpocket; then jokes and stories, and then supper.

The Drummer offered Hero his arm and said something which made her laugh. Mrs. Willow noticed it, and expressed to the Don her regret in not having been at the house-party. On this occasion the ecclesiast showed no compunctions in sitting with fourteen at the table.

"Too bad my valet hain't here," observed the Don, who missed his good squire, Sancho.

"Just as well," said the Doctor, remembering the story of Johan, "he'd be taking somebody's name in vain."

The suppers had about half finished the repast when the Wall Street man recalled the excursion to the realm of Day. Said he, "Hero has not paid for her ticket. It was issued on trust, and I hope she will not disappoint us."

"I would much prefer to tell a story by proxy," she answered, smiling and glancing at the down-easter, who was closely inspecting his coffee cup and the milk pitcher. The ecclesiast's soup story and the loss of his money had made him distrustful of most everything and everybody. The look on his face caused several to weep tears of merriment in the attempt to control their risibles. Hero was slightly disconcerted. She just recollected that her cook wore false teeth. But she was somewhat relieved when the Don announced it was only a minnow.

"A what?" inquired the Professor.

"Listen to the Don's fish story," said the amused Drummer.

"Be guy, I know a fish from a bird," returned the Don, sticking his fork in his cup as one would a spear in an animated aquarium. "Yer fellows what sez my stories hain't true jist focus yer peepers on this young muscalonge," and he raised a good-sized minnow and handed it to the Professor, who scrutinized it critically.

"First time," said the latter, "that I ever knew cows to be piscivorous animals."

"No, no," corrected Mr. Willow, "you are laboring under a misapprehension, you've got things turned around. Scranton's milk supply comes from sea-cows."

"Oh, that explains it."

Suddenly, the Dude placed his hand on his stomach and leaned back in his chair. "B' Jove!" he exclaimed, "I feel funny. Doncher know, I haue an ideah I swallowed a fish. I fauncy I feel it swimming; it makes me weal seasick."

The Doctor took the idiot away from the table and administered a dose of advice. But as he thought he heard several choking to death, he quickly returned and finished his coffee.

"I wonder if *it* is an only child?" queried the Drummer, alluding to the Dude.

"Must be," said the Journalist; "you know that 'nature, when she grants but one child, always compensates by making it a prodigy.'"

Soon the company had finished one of the most enjoyable repasts of their lives, and were again gayly chatting in the drawing-room.

"Come," said the Lawyer, "now for your story, Hero."

"I'll bet the Lackawanna Railroad against the New York Stock Exchange that Hero can outmatch the best of us at story-telling," added the banker.

"Well, friends," responded the hostess sweetly, as she clasped her hands upon her knees in a fascinating pose, "obedient to the tacit agreement that I should relate a story ere our merry company separates, I will tell you a legend.

"Sad as the story goes it possesses little in common with the bright and amusing tales you have told, but it will point a moral and, perhaps, demonstrate the wisdom in the familiar saying, 'The course of true love never does run smooth.'"



"I WILL TELL YOU A LEGEND."

CHAPTER XXXII.

LEGEND OF THE WHISPERING-VASES.

BY THE WIDOW.

“ THERE lived in the modern time a noble young man, by name, Londel—noble in heart and soul. His heart was as expansive as the heavens, his soul as lofty as the stars, and both were reflected in his honest blue eyes which beamed the sublimity and romantic ardor of his nature. He was reared in a garden spot in the hills by kind and indulgent parents. A born lover of nature, his favorite companions were the flowers which matted the fields and scented the woods, the birds which sang in his dooryard, the bees and butterflies—he loved them all.

“ But one day these gay and unsympathetic companions found a rival in the person of a sweet little maiden, named Esda, who became a partner in Londel’s fondest pastimes and the subject of his fairest dreams.

“ From early youth he was often inspired by the Muse, but in later life he associated his first poetic effusions with his earliest meeting with Esda.

“ Apparently with the greatest ease he would improvise exquisite stanzas to the birds which revealed to his ears new songs, or extol in sweet rhymes the charms of a newly discovered flower.

“ And when at times enchanted with some rare phase of Esda’s surpassing beauty, he could only give adequate expression to his admiration by lapsing into extemporaneous song, or cutting a tender rhyme in the

bark of a tree which marked the scene of that new charm's discovery.

"One of his earliest poems was engraven on a slab of birch-bark while Esda herself stood by innocently beaming upon her lover the inspiration that gave the lines:

" 'Esda's eyes are soft and brown,
Soft as a summer's day new blown,
Brown as the woods in autumn time,
Where two elves dwell together;
Warm as the aromatic thyme,
Coy as the mountain heather!'

"Esda was dark as Londel was fair. Her eyes made her whole face beautiful. Her disposition, too, was sweet and even, like the gentle rill that courses smoothly through the meadows to break madly now and then into diminutive eddies, and thereby impart a brighter charm to nature. For whenever Esda was suddenly provoked to anger, Londel simply admired her in silence, and, were they threading the field at the time, he would stoop and pluck a buttercup or clover-blossom from among the bending grasses, and handing it to her remind her that 'the flowers are the stars in the firmament of earth,' just as her harsh words were the sweeter notes in the gentle music of her voice.

"Then Esda's cheeks would redden, her lips pout, her eyes flash like black diamonds, and with a hearty laugh she would throw the blossoms in his face. And the rill had passed another eddy.

"It was not until Londel left home for college that he knew how deeply he was in love. During the four years which followed, the vacations with their adieus and greetings continued to strengthen his passion, until, finally, after graduation, he set out for the great City

of Cosmopolis to begin his life's career. There, separated from all his dearest ties, he found himself unhappy and quite alone, a wanderer in a wilderness of strange faces cold and indifferent to his own.

"Esda, however, had not finished her education. She was still at the school of the Sacred Heart a hundred miles away. The low-walled edifice crowned a picturesque height overlooking the Ancient City of Promise. Thither once or twice a year had Londel sailed up the River of the Bittersweet, radiant with hope, only to return through the same enchanting valley with the light of his star of destiny still fainter and more unsteady than before; for Esda either failed to interpret his attentions, or, divining them, denied him the encouragement for which he prayed. Each time the passionate lover would burst upon her presence like a sweeping wave, while she would recoil from his ardent advance like some chaste pond lily that eludes the grasping hand and ducks beneath the surface of the water.

"One evening at the twilight hour while seated at his chamber window his eyes discerned the faint twinkling of Venus just above the horizon, and he was reminded of his own evening star beyond his vision. Then, glancing pensively into the street, he discovered a postman approaching the house with an envelope in hand. Esda was owing him a letter, and his heart seemed to cease beating from the force of its suspense. The letter was for him, but not from Esda. It came from a favorite cousin who happened also to be at the school of the Sacred Heart. But the eager lover devoured its contents as greedily as if they were penned by Esda's own hand. The cousin wished him to visit her. She described the charms of her favorite class-mate, and called her the dearest girl that ever lived,

and wanted Londel to set his cap for her, and so true was the pen picture she had drawn that he was not surprised when she mentioned Esda's name. 'Come soon,' the postscript ran, 'and waste no time, for a handsome man is very attentive to her—and with apparent favor in her eyes.' 'Esda's eyes?' ejaculated Londel, and, crushing the letter with passionate jealousy, he exclaimed, 'What imposition! how dares he aspire to her hand!' These remarks at once aroused suspicions in the mind of his friend, who happened at the time to be reclining on the bed.

"Up to this moment Londel had kept his secret. Now he was made to confess.

" 'Why don't you look after your fences?' inquired the friend.

" 'How can I without decent clothes to wear?' was the lover's reply.

" 'Borrow mine,' said the friend; 'don't let a trifle like that wreck your whole life.'

" These hearty words impressed Londel as being very absurd, for if ever there was a champion of celibacy it was the friend. He accepted the timely advice, however, and next day arranged for a short leave of absence from his business, and prepared for the momentous journey.

" His room on the eve of his departure depicted a scene as lively as it was unique. Everybody in his lodgings appeared to have divined his prospective mission, and showed a genuine interest in his welfare by contributing to his 'trousseau,' as the friend termed it, he declaring it meant a wedding, sure. But Londel refused to look on the cheerful side. His business career thus far had been a disappointment. Just when his faithful labors had begun to promise him promo-

tion, the management of his business changed, and he was relegated to an inferior position which necessitated the strictest economy. He avoided society, and denied himself clothes and pleasures, hoping ere long to regain the lost ground. And now, repulsive as was the thought, he felt compelled to make love in borrowed clothes. To begin with, the friend loaned him his best Prince Albert coat, and, as he admired the garment on the nervous lover, remarked that it fitted him like the paper on the wall. Londel observed the walls were cracked and badly wrinkled. One fellow contributed a pair of new patent leathers, uncomfortably small; another, a silk hat; a third, a fashionable cravat; a fourth, a pair of stylish trousers of the latest cut; and so on until Londel remarked, that he had nothing on but a collar button he could call his own, and the friend wittily replied, that he looked like a different man.

“The journey to the City of Promise seemed to Londel unusually long. It was mid-winter. The mountains wore hoods of glistening snow. White-winged ice-boats scudded before the breeze up and down the glassy surface of the frozen river, giving the Valley of the Bittersweet the appearance of an inverted sky alive with soaring gulls. And, amid these animate images, passed and repassed in rapid review before his mind enchanting visions of the idol of his heart, chatting sweetly by his side, or seated at the piano winning from the ivory keys octaves of adoring melody, or, still again, as a vestal virgin in the Cathedral choir, chanting with angelic voice the saintly music of a hymn. The terrestrial vehicle wheeled on, yet he heard it not; the conductor took from his fingers the railroad ticket, but he failed to recollect it. Not until the burr of the wheels ceased in the City of Promise did the distant Cathedral

spire, rising like an inspiration above the cloisters of the Sacred Heart, recall him from the realm of Fancy and remind him he was on sacred ground. He hastened at once to the hotel to dine and dress for his call, having left on the train, in his absent-mindedness, a pair of borrowed overshoes.

"How he dreaded the task before him! He thought he might have the courage to tell Esda he loved her, but the idea of asking her to love him in return almost caused him to retreat to the train. Yet the hour of eight found him in the reception room of the School listening for Esda's footsteps.

"The cousin, greeting him affectionately, said she had carried out the plans he had directed in his letter; and shortly after Esda arrived she offered a plausible pretext to retire to her room, and left the couple to themselves.

"For a half hour the two chatted pleasantly as ordinary friends would do. Then Londel began to feel the strain of his purpose upon his nervous system. His pulse beat wildly, his face lost its cheerful aspect, and he looked with a serious, fixed stare into the frightened maiden's eyes, as if he would they were windows to her heart. 'Esda dear, I love you,' he finally said. What more was needed to express his adoration? For a moment both were silent. Her silence gave him courage. And forthwith he poured out his heart's love in such a bountiful stream of eloquent and tender earnestness that Esda could only sit in wonderment and listen till he had finished.

"After a time the enchanted maiden suddenly withdrew her head from her lover's shoulder, and with crimson cheeks and uplifted eyes told him to speak no more, it was of no use. She loved him dearly as a

friend, a brother—that was all. She loved no man. He had done far more to make her past lovely to remember than she had to make his. He had found companions in nature, whereas all her girlish devotions were to him. If he would only promise never again to attempt to break the golden bonds of friendship for a higher and nearer relation, she would always esteem him *so* dearly for it. She would joy in his every success, and she predicted many of them. ‘Can I make her such a promise?’ he asked himself. ‘Does she really know her heart?’ He arose from his seat and again taking her hand tenderly in his, said, with visible effort: ‘Farewell, Esda, dearest and best. I came to you when the world was bright, but now I blindly grope in the darkness of life’s first eclipse. While it breaks my very heart to give it, I give you the promise that you ask.’ And, bending his knee, he kissed her hand and left a burning tear upon it. Then he arose and met her pitying gaze, as if he must have one fond farewell look into the dazzling eyes that had beguiled him into sorrow. But it was only for a moment. Without another word he left the room and hastened to the train. Twice Esda called to him ‘Forgive me!’—‘Write to me!’ But Londel paid no heed.

“Esda sank upon the sofa, the most miserable of maidens. In Londel’s delirium he had left with her the silver-handled umbrella loaned by the generous landlady, and she clung to it affectionately, as if in it she saw a hope of her lover’s return. And why should she wish his return? She could not tell. She still would have allowed him to depart the same unhappy man.

“Upon his arrival in Cosmopolis, Londel left in the train a handsome traveling-bag he had borrowed from a fellow boarder, and when he finally reached his lodg-

ings, he sighed aloud, 'Everything is lost, not only what I borrowed, but all I called my own, my heart, my hope, my head!' And without disrobing he flung himself upon the bed, and suffered the keenest pangs of defeat until sleep came mercifully to his relief.

"The first mile-stone of his life was passed.

"In time the lost articles were recovered and returned to their respective owners, and due apologies made.

"As the months went by, a gradual change came upon the despondent lover. He wore a brighter countenance. He entered into his business with increased ardor, as if in its refreshing excitement he might bathe his sorrow. He had resolved to achieve such brilliant successes as should cause Esda to repent deeply her heartless action, and again to make her proud to own him as a friend and rejected lover. 'And yet,' he reflected, 'what empty consolation does it bring me, most unhappy man that I am.'

"Disappointments are the leaven, and the will is the power that kneads the noble character of a rounded man. Londel was one who believed 'All things work for the best;' thus he was not completely surprised to receive one day an envelope in Esda's handwriting. It contained her card on which was an expressed wish for him to call upon her and her father at a hotel where they were guests for a night. But Londel felt he still lacked the courage to see her. He feared lest he might betray some emotion painful to her heart and to his, and he so wrote her, adding that he hoped to see her some day when he carried a stouter heart. But upon posting the letter he chided himself for his weakness. And after the evening was far advanced and though the spring equinox was raging, he seized an umbrella and set out for the hotel.

" There he paced back and forth on the pavement in the drenching rain, scanning each darkened window with the only consolation that perhaps in one of their chambers reposed the idol of his heart's ruined fane.

" It was not until the second summer following that he felt quite fully restored to his old self. He then decided to visit the scenes of his youth, and invited his friend to spend his vacation with him.

" He pointed out to the interested comrade his favorite boyhood haunts. The two rowed along the pebbly shores of the lake; they visited the picnic groves, the fishing stream, and the swimming hole, and one day he showed the place where he had saved Esda's life: the youthful pair were scaling by a narrow path the steep acclivities of the glen for ferns when, suddenly, a harmless little snake crawled out of the rocks to bask in the sunshine, and frightened Esda into his arms instead of to her death on the rocks below.

" In threading the gorge, Londel and his friend finally emerged into a wide opening in the hills, where arose stately trees and the stream separated into rivulets that lost themselves in the shades of the forest. Here, in early summer, Esda and he used to hunt for the tender wintergreen, and gather fragrant azaleas, and give names to the hills and rivulets and pathways as if they were the first to discover them.

" Presently, as though under the spell of Esda's spiritual guidance, Londel strolled to a clump of beech and birch trees, and stopped. His manner was strange; his friend thought him in a dream. He now began to trace with his finger invisible outlines in the air, which had the semblance of a heart and the letters L and E. The friend gently drew his hand under Londel's arm to lead him away, but he would not go. Then, as if in

apology for his absent-mindedness, Londel said: 'I knew this spot so well, I did not notice the dear old tree had gone. See! There rests the unhappy stump, crumbling in decay. The once beautiful tree has been cut off in its very prime by some cruel, devastating hand. Why have chosen the consecrated one, and the rest left standing? Those cold birches were mere acquaintances, this sturdy beech was a loving friend. It dropped for us each autumn a harvest of delicious nuts.' Here, choked with his own words, he paused a moment in silence, and then, addressing the crumbling tablet to the grave of past pleasures, continued: 'Poor stump, what a disenchanting aspect you present to your old friend! Oh, that I might call you back to life for one brief hour! A decade ago upon your noble trunk my little sweetheart and I engraved the signet of our childish love. I felt confident you would still be living a verdant monument to my buried hope when I should come here in after years to commune with her dear spirit, to worship at the shrine of love. Would to God I had been here to protect you, to cry:

““ Woodman, spare that tree!
Touch not a single bough!”

““ Alas, even Nature herself hath deserted me!’ Here the grief-stricken lover knelt in an attitude of silent prayer. The stump was his altar, the tufted moss his *priedieu*. The leaves of the overhanging boughs whispered their tender sympathies as if Nature, pained at heart, were suffering remorse. The censers of the slippery-elm and the sassafras filled the woodland sanctuary with their inspiring incense, while in a tree close by a wood-thrush sang its sweet, sad litany over the unhappy group—for even the friend had to turn his

eyes from the pathetic scene. Presently Londel stooped and kissed the weather-beaten stump, and then, rising, sadly walked away.

"Days passed. It was Londel's intention to trust to mere chance in meeting with Esda. One day he was detailed by a party of old friends to invite her in person to a picnic that was planned, and, not wishing to disclose his secret, he reluctantly accepted the errand.

"Several times he passed and repassed her home on the hillside, not having the courage to enter the gate, and when, finally, he stood at the door and heard the familiar sound of her footsteps on the floor, his heart beat wildly as of old.

"Esda appeared to be overjoyed to see him. She led him to the veranda where they talked pleasantly for an hour, after which time Londel began to feel the strain of renewed suspense. Judging from her demeanor, her heart had completely changed since he saw her last at the school of the Sacred Heart. He thought he had never before detected such tenderness in her eyes and voice. Still, when he recalled to mind her once positive denial and the promise she exacted from him, he reasoned it must be only pity that she felt. The doubt tortured him.

"Rising to leave, he glanced across the valley. There he observed above the horizon a white, filmy cloud in the shape of a dagger, hanging in the sky like a bitter omen over the present. 'O unkind weapon of unrequited love!' he sighed, 'you stabbed my heart long, long ago, and it is bleeding still.'

"When the picnic party assembled on the shores of the lake next day, Esda handed Londel her shawl and lunch-basket. She intended it as a delicate hint for him to be her oarsman, but he, feeling it was a mark of

friendly esteem rather than of genuine love and affection, appeared not to notice it, and rowed another girl instead. And as soon as the boats were beached upon the wooded point whither the merry party were bound, the lover stole away to a little ravine back of the grove, which was one of his favorite haunts in boyhood, and to which he had given the name 'Glen Esda.'

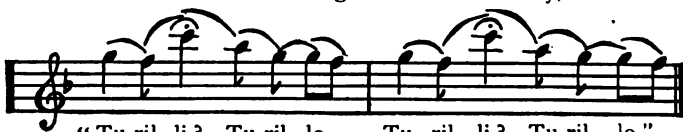
"There the wood-thrush used to sing, and now to his joy as he entered the pensive shades of the dell, the first sound that greeted his ears was the bird's sweet song. The other men, upon landing, at once separated to collect driftwood for the evening fire, and it was not until the girls summoned them to the repast they had prepared that Londel was generally missed. Esda alone had observed him steal away in the direction of the ravine, and thither now she ran to call him. Instead of entering the glen and following the path along the stream, she chose a shorter way through the trees on the hillside, that she might look over the bank down on to her lover's favorite seat. And there she found him, apparently absorbed in reverie. He was half reclining on a smooth rock across the stream, and facing her, with head propped in his hand. As Esda raised a knee upon the boulder over which she leaned, beside the noble sycamore that hid her from his view, a dry twig snapped beneath her foot, but it failed to arouse the dreaming lover. Then, presently, while she watched him her ears detected the plaintive notes of his favorite bird on a bough above his head, and the scene appeared to her to be but a new picture from an old negative, except that the boy had grown to manhood. And while she watched him, reluctant to disturb his spell, she soon discovered in the notes of the singing thrush a perfect imitation of the whistling rings of the dear old

swing in which Londel used to swing her. Fond memories came flooding back upon her mind. A new, tender, passionate love filled her heart to overflowing, and her lustrous eyes beamed upon her lover such wondrous radiance that, touched with the inspiration of their enchanting gaze, Londel soon began to intone a new and beautiful song; and when to her amazement Esda discovered that so perfect was the sympathy existing between their minds that his words described her own retrospective thoughts, the transport of her heart was complete. All was still in the shady dell, save the bird's soft notes and the gentle music of the stream, which blended in a sweet accompaniment to the poet's tender strain:

“‘TU-RIL-LI? TU-RILLO.

“‘Where lulling stream and pensive shades
 Idealize a glen,
I rest my sorrow for a day
 To dream the love of men.
Athrough the emerald verdure fades
 The heaven's turquoise blue,
Below the rippling waters say,
 “Dear trees, we cherish you.”
At dawn to hum his lazy wing
 The drone rolls out of bed;
At eve the cricket lulla-bies
 Till bows its sleepy head;
The wood-thrush stops its journeying
 To float its plaintive song,
Till memory bedims my eyes—
 I hear a voiceless throng:
 My little girl and I swing high,
 Then down and up we go;
The rope-rings whistle, “tu-ril-li?”
 And back again, “tu-rillo.”

'Tis only a dream of the past, and why?
The wood-thrush sings on a limb close by,

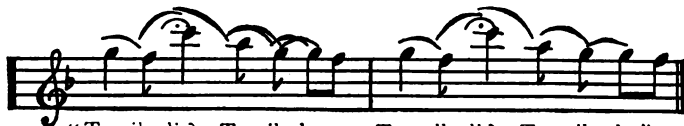


"Tu-ril-li?, Tu-ril lo, Tu-ril-li? Tu-ril lo."

"How oft the time I've sought this glen
On just such summer days,
A cooling place for burning heart,
A shield from solar rays;
But I could find no solace then,
Although the streamlet sang;
Then every voice that took my part
Pricked like a serpent's fang.
I've watched, while leaning on this rock,
The browned chestnuts nod,
The scented violets in spring
Swing censers to their God;
Viewed each fair shrub don its new frock,
And doff it in the fall,
But ne'er till now did wood-thrush bring
The answer to my call:

My little girl and I swing high,
Then down and up we go;
The rope-rings whistle, "tu-ril-li?"
And back again, "tu-rillo."

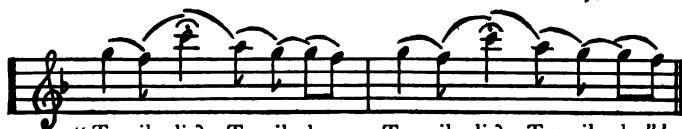
The answer comes to my call, a sigh,
As the wood-thrush warbles the melody,



"Tu-ril-li? Tu-ril lo. Tu-ril-li? Tu-ril lo."

"When age shall winter white my hair,
Spin webs upon my brow,
And Summer's sun shall burn as hot
As my full heart does now,

Ere I have banished mundane care
 To seek eternal rest,
 I hope to visit this sweet spot,
 Of woody walks the best ;
 For here will blossom still the flowers
 Whose opiates blest my dream ;
 Here, too, the wood-thrush, warbling,
 Will chant to the playing stream.
 Then I shall live again the hours
 Of childhood and to-day ;
 My angel sweetheart I shall swing
 Love's own, fond, artless way :
 My little girl and I swing high,
 Then down and up we go ;
 The rope-rings whistle, "tu-ril-li ?"
 And back again, "tu-rillo."
 Oh, I would then swing up to the sky,
 While the dulcet tones of the wood-thrush cry,



"Tu-ril - li ? Tu-ril lo, Tu-ril - li ? Tu-ril lo."

" But now Esda heard her friends calling to her from the grove, and, although reluctant to break her lover's poetic spell, yet fearing her prolonged absence might excite alarm, she called to him that lunch was ready, and hurried back. At length the evening shades gathered. The merry group assembled round the blazing fire, and engaged in song and story ; and then Esda surprised her lover by her delicate devotion. Leaving her rustic couch of hemlock-boughs on the opposite side of the fire, she spread her shawl upon the beach beside him, where she gazed into his eyes with such apparent affection that he, unable to divine her motive, wearied of the dread suspense she caused him, and softly stealing away, rowed out in the moonlit lake to



"THE WOOD-THRUSH SINGS ON A LIMB CLOSE BY."

be alone. What a contrast, he thought, between his sorrow and the happiness of his fellows! Mirrored in the placid water, the fire on the beach flared like some mystic forge, and the songs that reached his ears seemed but the echoing sounds of spiritual hammers which welded the present with the past. And when, at length, the party embarked for home, he observed in the receding grove two tree-tops leaning toward one another as if, awakened from slumber by old and familiar sounds, they were now whispering: 'There go the grown boy and girl who used to come here years ago so inseparably happy. See. In one boat is the pretty girl with hazel eyes, and in another the curly-headed youth who was her knight-errant then.'

" 'Yes, I observe. What do you suppose has come between them?'

" The picnic party arrived home at a late hour. Esda was to spend the night with one of the girls in town, and a happy fate paired the lovers in their walk. Londel offered Esda his arm, but she asked him to take hers instead, and when he tenderly drew her hand in his he met with no resistance. Hope at once swelled in his bosom. It was a little walk in Paradise which in his fancy he often repeated in after years.

" But, alas! when Londel said 'Good night,' Esda failed to respond to the gentle pressure he gave her hand. 'I am a fool,' he thought, 'to have taken hope at all.' And later, while walking with his Cosmopolitan friend to the inn, he sighed aloud, 'Cruel Esda to trifle with me so.'

" Vacation was soon over. Upon Londel's return to the city his health began to fail. He had received no benefit from his holidays. The suspense of mind was killing him.

"If he only knew Esda loved him, how quickly he would break his pledge! for then she would forgive him; but to ask again her love and be denied—that he could not do. She would doubtless remind him of his promise, and he would forfeit her respect. Foolish man!

"At length, the despondent lover gave up his business for an extended journey through the South. He wished for a time to avoid all familiar scenes and faces. There new fields were opened to his romantic mind. When wandering through the glittering subterranean halls of Luray, he fancied himself in the Enchanted Mountain of Spain, stored with Boabdil's treasures; and, again, while contemplating the beauty and the grandeur of the Natural Bridge, he exclaimed in mingled envy and admiration, 'How kind is nature to herself! Even those stony-hearted hills are united in happy wedlock!'

"Suddenly, Londel was severely startled by a hand being laid upon his shoulder. Turning, he beheld an old man with kindly eye and white hair and beard. The two exchanged friendly words, and then the old man said: 'That was a pretty speech about the Bridge. Only a true lover could voice so sweet a thought.' Londel smiled sadly, while yet surprised that he should have been overheard. The two sat down on a log, and, soon discovering that they were from the same state, became communicative. In time, the old man grew confidential and related a sad story of his early love. It appealed directly to Londel's own heart, and drew from him a confession of his present sorrow and all that had caused it. The old man seemed to be deeply moved. Said he, when Londel had finished his story, 'You are making a grave mistake. That girl loves you.

Go back and tell her you love her, or write her so at once. Never mind your promise. Put not your faith in a woman's answer. Human nature is irresponsible, false and fickle. Nature alone is true. Those wedded hills there have stood the test of ages. Write to-day; tell your sweetheart to reply at a place where you will be a month hence, and register your letter to make sure whether it shall reach her. If she does not respond with a full measure of love, then all my life's experience stands for naught.'

"Londel's eyes filled with tears of gratitude at the old man's sincerity, and squeezing his hand warmly he thanked him for his encouraging words. That day Londel wrote to Esda, and a sweeter and more tender missive than his no lover could have penned.

"'As I stood on the brow of the hill,' he began with characteristic delicacy, referring to the late past and gradually leading to the point, 'overlooking the scenes of early days, and recounted the many pleasures buried so long ago on the green hills and in the crystal lake with no monument to their memory but my memory, I seemed for a time to be alone in the world, willing to have exchanged the future for one hour's companionship with early hopes, but alas! they all had scattered like the autumn leaves—never more to return?'

"'Friendship, like Nature, is beautiful, but even the trees' fresh verdure is often too ardent in its aspiration for a higher beauty, and withers and decays before its time.'

"And then he told her how true and constant his heart had been, and how he dearly loved her, and finally asked her to be his wife and make his days complete.

"But so impatient was he for the answer that he found it difficult to decide which address to send her:

St. Augustine, Fla., where he would be three weeks hence, or Augusta, Ga., still later. And when he did decide he hurried to the nearest town to post the important missive. From that moment he carried a buoyant and happy spirit, so great was his faith in the old man's prophecy. The sunshine danced all about him. The whole world seemed changed.

" 'Esda is sighing for me,' he muttered while listening to the moaning pines of the Carolinas, and when he saw the magnolias of Georgia he exclaimed in ecstasies of delight, 'Nature is welcoming me with triumphal arches on every hand!'

" Even through the aisles of orange-blossoms of Florida he pictured his future bride. As each day passed his impetuosity intensified, until, at length, when he bade adieu to St. Augustine and crossed the Georgia border, his mind was so excited that he could not sleep at night. He arrived in Augusta on a beautiful spring morn. The air was scented with magnolias, and birds were singing gayly. He walked with a stout heart to the post office, and, after a moment's pause at the window, asked for the coveted letter. Alas! poor Londer, who would not have pitied him that moment! The letter had not come.

" But Londer bore his new disappointment bravely. He now endeavored to cast Esda entirely from his thoughts as his aged friend had advised, but he could not. While there existed the small chance that Esda's letter had been lost in the mail, he could not but retain a little hope. He returned soon after to the North and took passage for Europe. His savings were vanishing fast, and would only allow another year of idleness. 'But,' he reasoned, 'I can easily restore my fortunes when I have first restored my health.' He

was fortunate in his travels in forming a congenial companionship, and there was so much to see and to do in the Old World that, in time, whole days would pass in which Esda could not claim a thought. And before he knew it, the year passed, and he returned to Paris for a few days' rest before embarking for his native land.

"As soon as Londer entered that gay and festive city an unaccountable magnetism seemed to attract him toward the Louvre. He was a lover of art, but he loved nature more, and wondered why he should prefer the picture galleries to a stroll in the Bois de Boulogne. Nevertheless it was so, and next morning he set out alone for the Louvre. He stopped, finally, before one of the whispering-vases, and looked meditatively into its mysterious basin. 'The hand of man chiseled these wonderful vases from plain blocks of nature. Was it an accident? Not with God. He surely intended them to fulfil some office, sweet or sad, other than that of mere objects for admiration.' So he thought. Then, looking up, he saw a vision that astonished him. Could he believe his eyes? It was Esda! She had just passed him in company with a man whom he had never seen. Was she traveling in a pleasure-party? Was her hand pledged to another? Who and what could her escort be? She must have seen him. But why did she not speak? Presently, while her escort was admiring a piece of sculpture, Esda advanced to the other whispering-vase some distance down the gallery, and bent her face to its basin. Immediately Londer heard a whispered accent from out the vase before him: 'Londer,' it repeated. Surely it was Esda whispering to him! Had he anticipated this strange communication he could not have acted more promptly. 'Esda, dear

Esda,' he whispered back, 'I love you, dearest. Am I too late? When and where can I meet you to tell you more? Why do you pass me by?' And immediately the answer came out of the vase: 'Londel, say no more. Yes, you speak too late. Do not recognize me now, for my husband knows of you and is very jealous. I wrote to you at St. Augustine as you directed, and waited in vain for your reply. After six months my own letter was returned to me from the dead-letter office; you had not even called for it. Meanwhile I met my husband. And this is my wedding journey. See me some time in America. Be happy, and believe me always your true friend, Esda. Adieu, and may God bless you and make you happy. Again, adieu.'

"Then, suddenly, a hand touched Esda's arm—and her name was changed to Hero, whom you see before you now. I saw my unhappy lover weeping over the other vase, and with a heart full of pity I took my husband's arm and led him out of the gallery."

The charmed auditors almost felt that they had heard a chapter from Hero's own life, so feelingly had she spoken. By her unconscious and simple manner, by the alternating humor, pathos and tenderness of her sweet voice, she had caused them smiles and tears and hopes and fears and expectation and disappointment and surprise, in fine, nearly all of the keener emotions. For a moment following the conclusion of the legend not a voice spoke nor a muscle moved. No one wished to break the pleasant spell. At length the comedian, his eyes still fixed upon the fair enchantress, said softly and gallantly:

"'O queen of queens, how far dost thou excel!
No thought can think, nor tongue of mortal tell.'"

"She has won my Lackawanna," said the railroad director, enthusiastically.

"One of the sweetest tales I ever listened to," pronounced the Professor. And the ecclesiast added, "Esda put me in mind of the Doctor's 'cold widow.' Too bad the story ended so early."

"And so unsatisfactorily," added the Lawyer.

"'And what's her history?'" quoted the Tragedian, looking inquiringly at Hero.

"'A blank, my lord, she never told her love,'"

interposed Leander, taking up the score.

"'But let concealment, like a worm i' the bud,
Feed on her damask cheek ; she pined in thought,
And, with a green and yellow melancholy,
She sat like patience on a monument,
Smiling at grief. Was not this love, indeed ?
We men may say more, swear more ; but, indeed
Our shows are more than will ; for still we prove
Much in our vows, but little in our love.'"

"Love, what is love ?" interrupted the Don.

"Have you never read that pretty legend of the Alhambra ?" the attorney asked,—"'The Pilgrim of Love ?"

"'I pray thee my pretty bird, canst thou tell me what is love ?' Ahmed inquired of the dove, and the bird replied : 'Too well can I, my prince. It is the torment of one, the felicity of two, the strife and enmity of three. It is a charm which draws two beings together, and unites them by delicious sympathies, making it happiness to be with each other, but misery to be apart. Is there no being to whom you are drawn by these ties of tender sympathies ?'"

The Don, construing the question to be directed to

him, answered, "Wall, not exactly. One of my reasons for comin' East wuz ter get a leetle rest from my old woman. Hard ter understan' women. Only last week she wanted me ter git rid of a litter of kittens, an' when I wuz droundin' 'em in a tub, she dropped a bedstead outer th' winder onto me. Yer kin talk 'bout love, but I'm thinkin' thar's more brimstone an' phosphorus 'bout matrimony matches than any other kind. Course, I love beautiful women; but as fer marryin' 'em, one's enough fer a lifetime."

"And what is your idea of a beautiful woman?" queried the widow.

"Wall, yerself is a purty good substitute," answered the down-easter, meaning well, but causing the hostess blushes and the others conniptions. Hero had forgotten the Don's original method of giving definitions.

"But everybody has a different idea of beauty," observed the Tragedian. "'Ask the devil,' says Voltaire, 'what is the meaning of the Beautiful, and he will tell you, 'Le beau est une paire de cornes, quatre griffes, et une queue'" —a couple of horns, four claws, and a tail."

The Don chuckled and slapped his limb. "That solves th' conundrum," said he; "my wife an' th' devil're sweet on each other."

Suddenly the clock struck twelve, and the guests arose with one accord to go. Said the Tragedian, dramatically:

"'The deep of night is crept upon our talk,
And nature must obey necessity,
Which we will niggard with a little rest.
There is no more to say?'"

And his brother-player responded:

“‘No more. Good night.

Early to-morrow will we rise and hence.’”

The tenacity with which the actors adhered to their professional rôles amused Hero greatly, and she now took occasion to thank them for their scholarly entertainment.

“I have endeavored in vain all my life to get interested in Shakespeare,” she said; “but you have interpreted the great playwright so delightfully and so thoroughly during these two days and a half, I feel that I know him by heart.”

The actor bowed as low as he would to an applauding theatre audience. He thought what a splendid leading lady Hero would make should he be able to reorganize his company.

Suddenly the handshaking was interrupted by the Drummer. Said he: “It has just occurred to me, friends, that if our last three days’ experiences were written up they would make a story that would not only be interesting reading for our friends, but also in after years to us. Say we form ourselves into a little club and elect a historian, and each and all contribute to the expense of publishing a book.”

“Excellent!” exclaimed the Professor, enthusiastically.

“Call us The Unlucky Thirteen Club,” suggested the Preacher.

“That’s old,” complained the Wall Street man. “Make it something original; say ‘The Baker’s Dozen,’ or—”

“Capital!” interrupted the Lawyer. And upon the attorney’s motion the club was at once formed under the title of “The Baker’s Dozen.”

Next, on the Doctor’s motion, the Journalist was

elected "historian." The latter, however, accepted the office reluctantly.

"Do not lose sight of the fact," said he, "that it is not only an honor, but also an *onerous* task you have conferred upon me. I wish, rather, that you had elected the Lawyer, for with his abnormal memory he would have little difficulty in chronicling everything; not a word, a sigh, a groan, a look, the smallest act, would escape his mind; whereas I must wait until the inspiration seizes me. It may be within a month, or it may be ten years hence."

But the Journalist's arguments were unavailing. All agreed that he should take his time in writing the volume.

"Now let us elect an artist to illustrate the story," suggested Hero, with a mischievous glance at the Drummer. And at once the Dude—*upon his own nomination*—was duly elected the "delineator" and directed to confer with the historian. Then the hand-shaking was resumed and "good nights" were said; but the guests were slow to depart. Everybody was loath to bid Hero a final adieu. But when she surprised them with a promise to be at the train at nine in the morning to see them off, they gave an orderly cheer and withdrew in lighter spirits. Hero, too, showed that she had become quite attached to the jovial party, or one of them, at least, and, though the air was chill, stood for a moment and waved to them in the doorway.

The party had not more than reached the street, however, when one of their number remarked that he had left his overshoes, and excusing himself hurried back to the house. The midnight air was still and sound traveled easily. So that Hero, upon opening the door,

was startled to overhear the Drummer's remark to his companions, "Just the night for a wedding, boys,—even a ring round the moon." Instantly she seemed to divine her lover's object in returning, and believing he, too, must have recognized the suggestive remark, she received him with blushing smiles.

The lover closed the door, and at once took Hero's hand tenderly in his.

"How strange, dear," he began, looking lovingly into her eyes, "that we should have met in such an extraordinary way, you on one train and I on the other. Six years ago—how quickly the years have passed, it seems but yesterday—on that momentous journey to the Convent of the Sacred Heart I left my overshoes on the train. I was absent-minded then, but this time I 'forgot' them for a purpose. Yes, darling, to tell you I *love* you—love you still, and more dearly than ever. And had you told your sweet legend at the 'house-party,' and I been allowed a moment's opportunity, I should have claimed you then."

"Again in borrowed clothes?"

"In borrowed clothes," smiled the happy lover. "But as it was, I thought it best to conceal our acquaintanceship from the knowledge of the others, in order that you, dear, might receive the greater homage."

"My precious, you acted wisely. I felt so safe with you; I knew I could count on you as a brother any time. I'm so, *so* happy that we met."

How well they understood one another now! As the lover pressed her head fondly to his bosom he imprinted upon her fair brow the signet of his love, and this time he met with no resistance. How much they meant, these words:

" My Londel! "

" My Esda! "

They now decided to keep the secret to the last. His fellows would mistrust him and he must hurry on. After a long and tender kiss the happy lover departed for the hotel. In his hurried walk he invented a plausible excuse for his delay, but when his inquisitive companions reminded him that he had not his overshoes on, he wished a hole might open in the floor and swallow him up.

" Happy the man who gets *that* widow, " said he, with affected disappointment.

And his rivals were at once relieved.



"DON'T YOU SUPPOSE ANY OF THEM SUSPECTED?"

CHAPTER XXXIII.

SEPARATION—TWO HEROES.

“‘All hail, sweet madam, and fair time of day.’”

It was Leander who extended Hero this classic greeting, as he gallantly advanced to assist her to alight from the sleigh. His rivals in love had, with him, been particularly vigilant in their watch for the widow, but at a moment when the fickle natures of the others allowed them to become temporarily interested in the ladies of the theatrical troupe, of which our two actors were members, the comedian's keen ear had caught the sound of bells speedily approaching, and he bounded out of the waiting-room door, the first of the party to welcome her.

Hero looked as fresh and fair as spring's first rose in bloom. Her beauty was of a striking character and indisputably surpassed that of the ladies to whom she was soon introduced. But if the actresses felt any jealousy over her magnetism, they did not show it.

Leander had spoken so highly of the widow's good sense and inestimable womanly qualities generally that their eagerness to see and know her allowed no footing for other than cordiality and good feeling.

“How I wish you were going with us!” said the leading lady, who had lately given Leander his tonsure.

Taking all in all it was the jolliest appearing railway party that had met in many a day. Even the porter, who had learned the evening before that several members of the original party in their impetuosity to reach

New York were going to Wilkesbarre on the first train out of Scranton, had been at the station early so as not to fail to see them off. And when he set eyes on the down-easter his grin of gladness likened his face to a watermelon with a slice out of it. But it was more laughable still to observe the Don when he recognized his black squire, Sancho. The large-hearted, large-pantalooned, large-footed down-easter, carpet-bag in one hand and pasteboard bandbox in the other, straightened up and stared and smiled and, being convinced he beheld no other darkey than the porter, freed both hands as thoroughly as Lincoln did the slaves, and, clutching the darkey's hand, completely yanked him off his feet.

The Drummer lost no time in enriching the spirits of the company with his mine of jokes and stories, while the eastbound members were employing all their persuasive eloquence in trying to induce the westbound five to return with them as far as Philadelphia. The widower even urged them back to New York, promising them a grand "lay out" and the hospitality of his mansion until the blizzard was cleared and humanity resurrected.

They finally agreed to be ruled by the majority, and sent Mr. Willow to the hotel in his sleigh to pay their bills and get their luggage. The Doctor alone showed uneasiness, claiming that an important vaccination case required his presence at the sanitarium. Excusing himself, he went to the telegraph office and dispatched a long message of explanation, but he returned quite distressed upon learning that the Western Union system was yet crippled and might be for a day or two hence.

"Don't worry," said the Drummer, "you wrote yesterday, did you not?"

"Yes, but—"

The hearty laughter of the Don interrupted him. "What fer?" giggled the down-easter, thankful that he couldn't write.

"What does anybody write for?" returned the Doctor, amazed. "We all wrote letters—those who *could* write." And so they had, both Tuesday and Wednesday—and long letters, too, some of them.

The Don fairly howled with merriment. "An' th' letters 're in th' post office, yer crazy loons," said he. "Did yer think they went by carrier pigeons?"

It was now time for all to laugh.

"Of course," said Hero, amused, "how perfectly silly! There hasn't been a train out since Monday. How else could the letters go?"

But while the laughter continued the train backed into the station, and with the signal from the comedian:

"'Twenty adieus, my frozen Muscovites,
Are these the breed of wits so wonder'd at?'"

the company began to shake hands with Hero, and her brother-in-law who just then returned from the hotel with the baggage. And then, with several rounds of "good-byes" and "God speeds," all except Hero, Mr. Willow and the porter boarded the train. But on learning that they had five minutes to spare, the three joined them and chatted till the whistle sounded. Then the accepted lover helped Hero off the car, and greatly to the astonishment of the receding party, took off his hat and waved with her a farewell until the train was lost to view.

"Really, my dear," said the conscience-smitten lover, still waving his hat vigorously, "I don't feel

that I have treated the boys fairly. I acted my part almost too well."

"Perhaps we haven't deceived them as much as we think," returned Hero, with a chuckle. "That Drummer is awfully bright. Don't you suppose any of them suspected we had met before?"

"Never. But I, too, have suspicions. I would give a good deal to know who is the thief in disguise."

The lover's *coup d'état* had caused even more of a sensation among the departing travelers than he imagined.

Said the comedian, overcome with surprise and declining to wave with the others:

"Then we are rid of Lucio."

"'I' faith, he'll have a lusty widow now,
That shall be wooed and wedded in a day,"

responded the Tragedian.

"Not quite so far as a wedding," observed the Professor. "I don't take her to be as soft as all that."

"Then it was he who kissed her in the dark the first night," said Leander. "But I thought, at the time, he was taking great chances."

"It was not he—I can swear it," returned the other actor, with whom imitation kisses were a science.

"I should think you would always taste that kiss," remarked the Preacher.

"B'Jove! it waus naughty, but it waus nice, doncher know," observed the Dude; "I quite enwy the actaw."

"The future editions will be more sensational," added the Journalist.

And Leander quoted reflectively:

"Her voice was ever soft,
Gentle, and low; an excellent thing in woman."

"I declare," rejoined the outwitted Wall Street man, "I have a good mind to jump off the train and walk back and give him a trouncing."

"And leave your guests?" interrogated the Drummer.

And the Don added, with a significant shake of the head, "Beguy, they're foxy fellers, them Lawyers."



THE END.

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February 30, 1896.*

The source of all evil in this country as it relates to the liquor question lies in the vile and injurious and poisonous adulterations of all drinks and food products allowed to be disgracefully carried on by this *free* government. Fortunes are made on rum and all liquors and articles of diet by an unprincipled and avaricious few (numbering thousands) who plunder and poison mercilessly the helpless many (numbering millions).

Pass a national law making it a severe crime, with life imprisonment the penalty, to make or sell adulterated stuff, as does Germany and some other countries, and let the people suit their own tastes.

Immediately crime will in a large measure cease to be, and a drunkard will be a curiosity in the National Museum, to be preserved in alcohol.

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